

# THE VENISAMHĀRA: A CRITICAL STUDY















**THE VENĪSAMHĀRA:  
A CRITICAL STUDY**

**BY**

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काव्यकलादेवताचरणकमलयोः  
प्रथमः कुसुमाञ्जलिः





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## PREFACE

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This book is a companion volume to my edition of the *Veṇisambhāra* that was published last year. It is at the same time the first of a Series, entitled *Critical Studies of Sanskrit Dramas*, that I have planned. Succeeding volumes will be brought out in the future year after year. I hope to publish at least a dozen of them.

The plan of the Series will be clear from this volume. I shall feel much obliged if scholars, who have occasion to read this book, will be kind enough to let me know what they think of this Series and send me any suggestions or criticism that they may have to make for its improvement.

A. B. G.





## I THE AUTHOR

### 1 PERSONAL ACCOUNT OF BHATTA NĀRĀYANA

It is the misfortune of almost all Sanskrit poets to remain, as far as their personal history is concerned, concealed under a thick veil of obscurity or even darkness which, under the present circumstances, appears an impossible task to remove. The questions which naturally arise in the mind of a student, when he begins the study of an author, as to what kind of man he was, where he lived and how he passed his life, must, it would seem, for ever remain unanswered in the case of many of our poets. The pleasure that a student of English literature derives from the knowledge that a particular tone in the writings of his favourite poet is traceable to certain incidents in his life<sup>(a)</sup>, is denied to a student of Sanskrit. The study of a poet's life is in English almost the first thing we do in order to understand properly the spirit of his poetry, but in Sanskrit

- (a) In this connection we may mention the poems of Byron which so eminently illustrate the truth of this. In these we find a spirit of garrulousness and of discontent with and defiance of the world which does not seem to give to the poet his due. This mood of Byronicism is understood and appreciated when we study the poet's life. —Similarly in the poems of Scott and also in some of his novels we note that the heroine is generally loved by two men, one of whom is doomed to failure. This fact, which strikes us so much as we read his works, becomes quite explicable when we study his life.

owing to the absence of proper materials no such thing is possible. An orthodox Pandit would even wonder what the knowledge of a poet's life had to do with the appreciation of his poetry, for he would not conceive that the one could in any way be connected with the other.

Sanskrit poets often supply a certain amount of information about themselves in their works. This tendency is particularly observable in the few poets who have written on historical subjects<sup>(b)</sup> in direct contrast with the authors of the Kāvya or Mahākāvya, who sometimes do not even affix their names to their compositions. Bühler found an explanation of this fact in the natural desire of these poets to secure their own immortality with that of the heroes of their works.<sup>(c)</sup> Dramatists also sometimes furnish an account of themselves in the prologues to their plays. But this account even in the case of the most communicative of them<sup>(d)</sup> does not go much beyond the mention of some of their ancestors, the place of their residence, their family name and title and a description, many a time in grandiloquent terms, of their learning. Such information of course never satisfies the student who

(b) The seventh century poet Bāṇa is the most notable of such writers. Besides a small account of his ancestors that is given in the introductory stanzas to his Kādambarī, Bāṇa has devoted the first two Uucchāsas, and even a portion of the third, of his Harṣacarita to his own autobiography. Similarly, the poets Bilhana, Maṅkha and Vākpati have given a pretty full account of their lives, contemporaries etc. in their Vikramāṅkadevacarita, Śrīkaṇṭhacarita and Gaṇḍavaho respectively.

(c) Vide his Introduction to the Vikramāṅkadevacarita, p. 5

(d) Note the prologues to the plays of Bhavabhūti and especially that of his Mahāvīracarita. Also read the prologue to the Balarāmāyana of Rājasekhara.



wants to know something about the poet as a man and consequently he is thrown on his own resources to gather a few pieces more from the study of the poet's work.

Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa is by no means communicative in this respect. In the prologue to his *Venīsamhāra* he tells nothing about himself except that he enjoyed the title *Kavimṛgarāja* (Lion among Poets).<sup>(e)</sup> Perhaps he thought he was well known in his days and did not feel the necessity of adding any more details about himself. Whatever that may be, the usual source of gathering bits of information about a dramatist viz. the prologue to his play fails us in the case of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa. Quite a mass of information about Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa is, however, available to us in chronicles of Bengal such as *Kṣitīsavarṇasāvalīcarita*, *Vaṅgarājaghataka*, *Rājāvalī* and *Dakṣiṇarādhīyaghataka-kārikā*. But these do not possess much historical value. At the same time it must be remarked that accounts contained in these must not be unceremoniously set aside. For it is possible to extract from them authentic pieces of information.

The first thing then that we know about Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa is that originally he belonged to *Kānyakubja* or *Kanauj* and went to settle in Bengal as the leader of four other *Kānyakubja Brāhmaṇas* at the special request of King *Ādisūra*. He belonged to the *Śaṇḍilya* gotra. As a reward for spiritual services which Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa rendered to him, King *Ādisūra* bestowed on this immigrant *Brāhmaṇa*

(e) Printed editions of the play all read 'तदिदं कवेर्भुगराजलक्ष्मणः मृदुनारायणस्य.' But there is no doubt this is a corruption from 'तदिदं क्रावभुगराजलक्ष्मणः मृदुनारायणस्य.' Though there is no direct Ms. evidence for this specific reading, it is significant that a Ms. reads 'कवेर्भुगराजलक्ष्मणः'. From this it is easy to see how the original reading must have passed through the following process of corruption: कवेर्भुगराजलक्ष्मणः—कवेर्भुगराजलक्ष्मणः—कवेर्भुगराजलक्ष्मणः



several villages for a nominal price.<sup>(cc)</sup> In course of time the number of the villages owned by Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa increased with the result that in the end he attained the status of a king and became the founder of a dynasty, whose history is recorded in the *Kṣītīsavaṃśāvalīcarita*. Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa is also popularly believed to be the original ancestor of the illustrious Tagore family of Calcutta, though the members of this family are not at present able to adduce any evidence for this belief.

The five Brāhmaṇas, who migrated from Kānyakubja to Bengal, belonged to the division called Sārasvatas and consequent on their settlement in Bengal they came to be known as Gauda Sārasvatas. Thus Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa was the leader of Sārasvata settlers in Bengal and thus became the founder of Gauda Sārasvata Brāhmaṇism in that province.

There is some doubt regarding the caste of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa. Some people hold that he was a Kṣatriya and this they do on two grounds viz. (1) The *Kṣītīsavaṃśāvalīcarita* refers to Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa and his descendants as *Kṣītīsas* and the word *Kṣītīsa* like *Rājan* points to the Kṣatriya caste of those to whom it is applied. (2) The epithet 'Mṛgarājalakṣmaṇaḥ', by which Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa

- (cc) The number of these villages, according to the chronicles, was five. Grill thinks that the bestowal of these five villages surprisingly agrees with the demand for the same number of villages made by Yudhiṣṭhira in the *Mahābhārata* as well as in the *Veṇṇisaṃhāra*. He therefore holds that the episode of the five villages proves that the Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa of the chronicles was identical with the author of the *Veṇṇisaṃhāra*. It must be confessed that this argument is by no means convincing. However it does not affect the identity between the two, which is based on other considerations.



distinguishes himself in the prologue to the *Veṇīśaṃhāra* shows that he was a Kṣatriya. Mṛgarājalakṣman means one whose surname or family name is Mṛgarāja or Simha or Sinha. Now Simha is an addition which is usually made to the names of Kṣatriyas as in Pratāpa-Simha, Jaya-Simha etc. Simha as a family name also belongs to Kṣatriyas. Therefore, Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa was a Kṣatriya.

It will be seen that both these grounds are unsatisfactory. First, Kṣitīśa just means a king and the word has no such connotation as Rājan possesses. Brāhmaṇa kings are not unknown even in modern times. So there is nothing wrong if the Brāhmaṇa Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa and his descendants are styled Kṣitīśas. Secondly, the elaborate edifice built on the epithet Mṛgarājalakṣmaṇaḥ rests on very insecure foundations. The correct form of the epithet at the outset is not Mṛgarājalakṣmaṇaḥ, but Kavimṛgarājalakṣmaṇaḥ, as we have seen before.<sup>(f)</sup> Then again lakṣman means a distinctive personal designation or title and the word consequently cannot signify a family name or surname, which is common to all members of a family. Words meaning a lion usually find a place in distinctive titles such as Kirtana-Kesarin, Vedānta-Kesarin etc. Similarly, Kavimṛgarāja was a title of the poet. It had nothing to do with his caste.

On the contrary there are positive proofs to believe that Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa was a Brāhmaṇa. First, the epithet Bhaṭṭa clearly shows that he was a Brāhmaṇa. No Kṣatriya would ever be designated in this way. The contrast between bhaṭṭa and bhaṭa is well known. Secondly, the tradition preserved in the chronicles unanimously speaks of Brāhmaṇas as having been invited by Ādisūra from Kanyakubja and Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa was the chief of these

(f) Vide foot-note (c) above on p. 3.



Brāhmaṇas. Thirdly, the Kṣitīsavainsāvalicarita definitely refers to these immigrants as Brāhmaṇas and records certain incidents which go to establish their high Brahmanic lustre. Fourthly, there are in the Venīsamhāra clear indications to show that its author was a Brāhmaṇa. These may be thus set forth: (a) The character of the Vidūṣaka is conspicuous by its absence in the Venīsamhāra. The Vidūṣaka of Sanskrit dramas is always a Brāhmaṇa, who is such only in name. He does not possess any Brahmanical qualities and is always a butt of ridicule. A Brāhmaṇa author would not introduce in his drama such a character as will only serve to cast a slur on his caste. The dramas of Kālidāsa possess a Vidūṣaka, but the caste of Kālidāsa is unknown. Bhavabhūti, who is definitely known to be a Brāhmaṇa, has no Vidūṣaka in his dramas. Similarly, Viśakhadatta, who was a Brāhmaṇa, has no Vidūṣaka. On the contrary Śrīharṣa and Rājasekhara, who were Kṣatriyas, have introduced the character of Vidūṣaka in their plays. Thus, as Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa has no Vidūṣaka, it is assumed that he must have been a Brāhmaṇa. (b) The essential constituent elements of the body<sup>(g)</sup> such as blood, flesh, marrow etc. are the same whether the body belongs to a Brāhmaṇa or a Kṣatriya. Prick a Brāhmaṇa and a Kṣatriya and you will find the same kind of blood flowing from the bodies of both. But when a man tells you that the blood of a Brāhmaṇa is essentially different from that of a Kṣatriya, you may be certain that he is a Brāhmaṇa and is speaking from arrogant consciousness of the intrinsic superiority of his caste. And this is what Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa has done in the Interlude to Act iii of

- (g) These are known as dhātus and are usually regarded as seven viz. रसाद्यङ्मांसमेदोऽस्थिमज्जाशुक्राणि वातवः। To these three more viz. केश, त्वक् and स्नायु are added, making the dhātus in all ten in number.



his Venīsamhāra. When Droṇa was about to be killed, Vasāgandhā, the demoness, proposed to her husband Rudhirapriya that they should go and drink the blood of Droṇa. But the demon promptly deprecated such action by remarking that Brāhmaṇa-blood burnt the throat when drunk<sup>(h)</sup>. Such a remark in our opinion could only come from a Brāhmaṇa author. (c) Act iii of the Venīsamhāra depicts a quarrel between Karna and Aśvatthāman. If we carefully observe the way in which this quarrel starts and proceeds, we become aware of the poet's conscious efforts to ennoble the character of the Brāhmaṇa warrior Aśvatthāman, who is made out to be chivalrous and magnanimous, and to belittle that of the Kṣatriya hero Karna, who is represented as mean, ignoble and back-biting. This in our opinion clearly proceeds from the author's partiality for his caste. (d) The respect and reverence which Yudhiṣṭhira and Draupadī in Act vii of the drama are made to show to Cārvāka, who goes to them in the guise of an ascetic, even when they are immersed in anxiety, indicates the author's opinion that Brāhmaṇas must be respected by Kṣatriyas at all times and in all circumstances. This also is suggestive of the caste of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa.

The Kṣitīsavarnśāvalicarita records a miracle which Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa and the four Kānyakubja Brāhmaṇas who accompanied him to the court of Ādisūra worked on their arrival in Bengal. This is known as the miracle of the Mallakāṣṭha or wrestlers' post (Marāṭhi-Malakhāmba). What these Brāhmaṇas did was to stick consecrated mate-

(h) Read :

राक्षसी—अरे रुधिरप्रिय, किं नु खल्वेष महान् कलकलः श्रूयते ।

राक्षसः—वसागन्धे, एष खलु धृष्टद्युम्नेन द्रोणः केशेष्वाकुप्यासिपत्रेण व्यापाद्यते ।

राक्षसी—रुधिरप्रिय, एहि । गत्वा द्रोणस्य रुधिरं पिबावः ।

राक्षसः—वसागन्धे, ब्राह्मणशोणितं खल्वेतत् । गलं दृढदृढत् प्रविशति ।

तत् किमेतेन ।

—वेणीसंहार Act iii, p 59



rials of worship such as dūrvā grass and grains of rice to a wrestlers' post in five places in the evening of the day on which they went to the king's court. Next morning the door-keepers were surprised to see that the dry post had blossomed into a green tree with branches sprouting from the five places where the consecrated materials had been planted. The miracle was no doubt intended by the immigrants to impress on their new patron and his subjects their wonderful spiritual powers. We only recapitulate the incident here to show to the reader how historically unreliable these chronicles many a time are.

We have seen that tradition is unanimous in representing Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa as having migrated from Kānyakubja to Bengal. But different chronicles offer different reasons for this migration. Thus according to one account King Ādisūra once wanted to perform a Vedic sacrifice. He was however unable to obtain properly qualified priests to officiate for him in his kingdom. There certainly were some Brāhmaṇas well-versed in Vedic lore in Bengal. But they would not undertake the task of performing a sacrifice for him, because he was a Śūdra. He consequently requested the king of Kānyakubja to send him five eminent Brāhmaṇas from his city. Thus Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa and his four associates went to Bengal and performed a Vedic sacrifice for the Śūdra king Ādisūra. The second account says that Bengal once suffered from drought and the five Kānyakubja Brāhmaṇas were invited to obtain rain by means of sacrifices. According to the third Ādisūra wanted to know what sacrifice would secure for him the grace of the Almighty.<sup>(i)</sup> As the Brāhmaṇas in his kingdom were unable to satisfy him on this point, he invited the five Brāhmaṇas from Kānyakubja. The fourth account says that an evil omen once foreshadowed a cala-

(i) 'कन यज्ञेन भगवत्प्रीतिर्भयति निश्चितम्।'—बङ्गराजघटक



unity for the province of Bengal. Ādisūra thereupon requested the five eminent Brāhmaṇas from Kānyakubja to go to his country and perform sacrifices with a view to avert the threatened calamity. According to the fifth and last account these Brāhmaṇas left Kānyakubja on account of religious persecution.

Though the versions regarding the reason why these Brāhmaṇas left Kānyakubja and migrated to Gauda thus differ, it is not impossible to obtain from them a consistent story. That story would seem to be that Buddhism became powerful at the court of Kānyakubja, where Brāhmaṇas following Vedic religion found it impossible to continue the practice of their faith. Vedic religion mainly consisted in the performance of sacrifices. As these could not be performed in Kānyakubja where the Buddhistic doctrine of ahimsā or non-slaughter prevailed, the Brāhmaṇas migrated to Bengal, which was the stronghold of Brahmanism and continued to perform their sacrifices there.

This story receives corroboration if we look to contemporary history. The emperor Harṣa, who was born in 590 A. D., ruled over the whole of Northern India from 606 A. D. to 647 A. D. Though in his inscriptions he styles himself Paramamāheśvara,<sup>(j)</sup> we know from a statement of Bāṇa in his Harṣacarita and from the account of the Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang that the emperor was favourably inclined towards Buddhism and actually embraced that faith towards the end of his reign. Sthānpīśvara or Thanesar was the capital of Harṣa in the beginning, but later on it was shifted to Kānyakubja or Kanauj. Under Harṣa Brahmanism and Buddhism lived at peace, but after his death Buddhism grew aggressive at Kānyakubja and began to

(j) See the Madhuban Copperplate of Harṣa in *Epigraphia*

*Indica* Vol. I p. 67.

persecute the followers of the older religion. Even in Harṣa's time Bengal was known not only as the stronghold of Brahmanism, but as an inveterate enemy of Buddhism. King Śaśāṅka of Bengal had treacherously murdered Harṣa's elder brother Rājyavardhana, who in his early days had accepted Buddhism and is referred to in the inscriptions as Paramasaugata. Śaśāṅka hated Buddhism and did his best to extirpate it. He is known to have dug up and burnt the holy Bodhi tree at Gayā and persecuted the Buddhists in diverse way. The same pro-Brahmanic and anti-Buddhistic tradition continued in Bengal after Śaśāṅka. It therefore sounds quite reasonable that Brāhmaṇas following Vedic religion should migrate to Bengal from Kānyakubja in order to be able to follow their ancient religion of sacrifice without molestation.

A few more details about Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa can be gathered from his drama. Thus we know that he was a Vaiṣṇava or devotee of Viṣṇu. Out of the three stanzas that constitute the Nāṇḍī, two are in praise of Viṣṇu, and even in the third, which glorifies Śiva, reference to Viṣṇu is made in such a manner as to bring out the superiority of that good to Śiva<sup>(k)</sup>. Then again in the body of the drama whenever the author has occasion to speak of Kṛṣṇa, he does so in terms which unmistakably show that he holds the Yādava chief to be an avatar of Viṣṇu and looks upon

(k) 'विष्णुना सस्मितेन' i. 3. Vide our note on this passage. See also iii. 10 and our note thereon.



him as the highest Brahman itself<sup>(1)</sup>. Further, like all dvaita philosophers Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa held that the best means of reaching the Lord and obtaining emancipation was undivided or sole devotion to Him<sup>(m)</sup>. Ādisūra is supposed

(1) Read in this connection the following :

- (1) 'भगवता सकलजगत्प्रभवस्थितिनिरोधप्रभविष्णुना विष्णुनाद्यातु-  
गृहीतं मरतकुलम् etc.' p. 3
- (2) 'ततः स महात्मा दर्शितविश्वरूपतेजःसंपातमूर्च्छितमवधूय कुरु-  
कुलम् etc.' p. 20
- (3) 'सहदेवः—आर्य, किमसौ दुरात्मा सुयोधनहतको वासुदेवमपि भग-  
वन्तं स्येन रूपेण न जानाति ।

भीमसेनः—वत्स, मूढः स्वल्पं दुरात्मा कथं जानातु । पश्य ।  
आत्मारामा विहितरतयो निर्विकल्पे समाधौ  
ज्ञानोत्सेकोद् विघटिततमोग्रन्थयः सत्त्वनिष्ठाः ।  
यं वीक्षन्ते कमपि तमसा ज्योतिषां वा परस्तात्  
तं मोहान्धः कथमयममुं वेत्तु देवं पुराणम् ॥ २३ ॥

Act i p. 21

- (4) 'नाथ, असुरसमराभिमुखस्य हरेरिव मङ्गलं शुभाकं भवतु ।' p. 23
- (5) 'यत्किञ्चनकारितामधीक्षिपति विधेर्भगवति नारायणे ।' p. 155
- (6) 'पद्मीमासाय भगवता वासुदेवेनोक्तम्' p. 156
- (7) 'अहं च देवेन चक्रपाणिना देवसकाशमनुप्रेषितः ।' p. 160
- (8) 'यदेवस्त्रिभुवननाथो मणति तत् कथमन्यथा भाविष्यति ।' p. 160
- (9) 'को हि नाम भगवता संदिष्टं विकल्पयति ।.....देवस्य देवकीनन्दनस्य  
बहुमानात् ।' p. 161
- (10) 'कुरु भगवतो नारायणस्य वचनम् । न खलु सोऽलीकं संदिशति ।' p. 175
- (11) 'अये भगवान् पुण्डरीकाक्षो वत्सश्च किरीटी ।.....देव कुतस्तस्य-  
विजयादन्यथस्य भगवान् पुराणपुरुषो नारायणः स्वयं मङ्गलान्याशास्ते ।  
कृतयुग्महदादिक्षामसंस्तुतर्षति  
गुणिनमुदयनाशस्थानहेतुं प्रजानाम् ।  
अजममरमचिन्त्यं चिन्तयित्वापि न त्वां  
भवति जगति दुःखी किं पुनर्देव दृष्ट्वा ॥ ४३ ॥ Act vi p. 197

(12) 'न किञ्चिद्वदाति भगवान् प्रसन्नः' p. 199

- (m) 'भवतु च भवद्भक्तिर्द्वैतं विना पुरुषोत्तम' vi. 46. This stanza is some-  
times so interpreted as to make out Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa a  
follower of the Advaita School. This, we think, is  
entirely wrong. Vide our notes on the stanza. द्वैतं विना-  
भक्तिः just means एकान्तिका भक्तिः, so well known in the  
Bhāgavata Saṁpradāya.

to be the original ancestor of the Sena dynasty of Bengal. Evidence of inscriptions shows that the members of this dynasty were staunch Brahmanists and the object of their worship was Viṣṇu.<sup>(u)</sup> So it looks quite natural that the Vaiṣṇava Ādisūra should invite the Vaiṣṇava Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa to his court.

That Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa was a Vaiṣṇava there is absolutely no doubt. It is further made out on the strength of stanzas i. 23 and vi. 43 and 45 that he belonged to the Pañcarātra school of the Vaiṣṇavas. The earliest account of the Pañcarātra religion, which is also known as Sātvata, Bhāgavata or Ekāntika Dharma, is contained in the Nārāyaṇīya Section of the Śāntiparvan of the Mahābhārata. As a close student of the Mahābhārata Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa naturally must be familiar with the tenets of the Pañcarātra religion. It is possible he was a follower of this type of Vaiṣṇavism. We cannot say anything with certainty beyond this. The stanzas on which Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's partiality for the Pañcarātra school is sought to be based contain no reference to any exclusive Pañcarātra doctrines. It is true that Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa suggests in his play that Vāsudeva is the supreme deity and that the best means of attaining salvation is undivided devotion. But these tenets do not form the exclusive property of the Pañcarātra school. Its special characteristic is the doctrine of the four vyūhas or forms of the Supreme and there is no reference to this in the Venīsamhāra. It may be said that there was no occasion to refer to this technical belief of the Pañcarātras in the course of the drama. This is quite correct and that is exactly why we say that while it is possible that Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa

(u) Vide Cunningham's Reports of the Archaeological Survey of India, Vol. XV, Appendix—Note on the History of Bengal.



may have been a Pañcarātra, there is nothing definite in the play to show that he actually was.

Something may further be gathered about Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's general learning from the Veṅṛisambhāra. As the tradition says he was invited for the performance of a sacrifice it may be taken for granted that he was well versed in sacrificial literature and in the science of Karma-Mimāṃsā. This finds confirmation in the fact that he compares war with a sacrifice<sup>(6)</sup>. As he writes a drama based on the Mahābhārata, his close study of that great epic must be presumed. Stanzas i. 23 and vi. 43 and 45 show that the author was acquainted with the tenets of Yōya, Sāṅkhya and Vedānta Philosophy. As in his dramas Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa uses a large number of figures of speech, we conclude that he had studied the Alāṅkāraśāstra as well. The elaborate instructions for finding out the whereabouts of Duryodhana, which Yudhiṣṭhira issues at the commencement of Act vi, show that Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa must have studied works on Rājanīti or polity such as the Arthaśāstra of Kauṭīlya.

In concluding this section on the Personal Account of the Author we desire to state that we have taken it for granted that Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa, who according to the Bengal

(o) Read

द्रौपदी—नाथ, किमिदानीमेष प्रलयजलधरस्तनितमांसलः क्षणे क्षणे समरदुन्दुभि-  
स्ताड्यते ।

भीमसेनः—देवि, किमन्यत् । यज्ञः प्रवर्तते ।

द्रौपदी—(सविस्मयम्) क एष यज्ञः ।

भीमसेनः—रणयज्ञः । तथाहि

चत्वारो वयश्चत्विजः स भगवान् कर्मोपदेष्टा हरिः  
संग्रामाश्वरदीक्षितो नरपतिः पत्नी गृहीतव्रता ।  
कीरव्याः पशवः प्रियापरिभवकुशोपशान्तिः फलं  
राजन्योपनिमन्त्रणाय रसति स्फूर्तिं यशोदुन्दुभिः ॥ २५ ॥

Act i. p. 23



chronicles, was invited by Ādisūra from Kānyakubja was identical with the author of the Venīsamhāra. The chronological position, which the Venīsamhāra occupies in Sanskrit literature, does not militate against this identification. It must at the same time be pointed out that none of the chronicles says that the Brāhmaṇa Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa, who was invited by Ādisūra, was a poet and the author of the Venīsamhāra.

## 2 THE DATE OF BHATTA NĀRĀYAṆA

Ancient Indians achieved eminence in many departments of learning, but they lacked historical sense. This may perhaps be so because they were not much interested in the affairs of this world, which they regarded only as a place of preparation for the next. Whatever that may be, there is much truth in Max Müller's remark that history in the ordinary sense of the word is unknown to Indian literature. The result of this is that the dates of Sanskrit poets are far from being precisely settled. We consider ourselves fortunate if we are able to assign a poet to a particular century or at best to the first or second half thereof. Sometimes dates once fixed have to be revised in the light of new evidence subsequently discovered. 'All dates given in Indian history,' says Whitney, 'are pins set up to be bowled down again<sup>(p)</sup>.'

Two kinds of evidence are usually relied upon in determining the dates of Sanskrit authors viz. internal and external. Internal evidence takes the form of a reference to, or quotation from, a previous writer by the author in question in his works. Such reference or quotation gives us the *terminus a quo* or the backward limit for the date of the author. External evidence consists in a reference to or

(p) Introduction to A Sanskrit Grammar by Whitney, p. xix



quotation from the author by some subsequent writer and it supplies the *terminus ad quem* or the forward limit, later than which the author cannot be supposed to have flourished.

As regards internal evidence the *Veṇīśamhāra* of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa does not furnish any. There is no reference in it to any previous author. No other work of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa, where such evidence can be sought, is also available. But we possess ample evidence to determine the *terminus ad quem* for the *Veṇīśamhāra*. Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's drama proved very popular with writers on Sanskrit rhetoric or *Alaṃkāraśāstra*. They quoted from it on many occasions to illustrate different topics in their works. The most eminent of these writers, chronologically arranged, are Vāmana (750-800 A. D.), Ānandavardhana (840-870 A. D.), Dhanañjaya (950 A. D.), Bhojarāja (1005-1054 A. D.), Kṣemendra (1025-1075 A. D.), Mammaṭa (1100 A. D.) and Viśvanātha (1350 A. D.)<sup>(q)</sup>. It is not necessary to go into the details of the quotations from the *Veṇīśamhāra* that are found in the works of all these rhetoricians. We shall only refer to Vāmana who is the earliest of these writers and is assigned to the latter half of the eighth century. In his *Kāvyaālaṃkārasūtravṛtti* Vāmana has quoted from the *Veṇīśamhāra* at least four times. Once he quotes a line to illustrate the figure *Sahokti*<sup>(r)</sup> and three times more he notes and defends three ungrammatical forms of Bhaṭṭa

(q) The dates, which are given in parenthesis, do not represent the span of life of the various writers, or the year of their birth or death, but the period in which or the year about which the literary activity of the authors lay.

(r) Read 'वस्तुद्वयस्य क्रियोस्तुल्यकालयोरेकेन पदेनाभिधानं सहशब्दसामर्थ्यात् सहोक्तिः । यथा "अस्तं भास्वान् प्रयातः सह रिपुभिरयं संहियन्तां बलानि"

(V. v. 36d) under *मावाङ्मास* 4. 3. 58.



Nārāyaṇa<sup>(3)</sup>. Thus it is settled that the date of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa is some time anterior to 750 A. D.

A piece of external evidence may be used in the case of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa to obtain the *terminus a quo* or the backward limit also, though this evidence cannot be considered to be of a conclusive character. In the introductory stanzas to his Harṣacarita Bāṇa mentions some of his distinguished predecessors in the domain of poetry either by their names or by their works<sup>(4)</sup>. If Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa had preceded Bāṇa, he would have been referred to by him. But Bāṇa does not mention either our poet or his drama. This means that Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa came after Bāṇa. Bāṇa flourished in the first half of the seventh century. Putting together the results of these two pieces of external evidence we come to the conclusion that Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa must have lived some time between 650 and 750 A. D.

- (3) Read 'तेन "सुभ्रु किं संभ्रमेण" (Ve. ii. 19.—Here the reading adopted in our text is "भीरु किं संभ्रमेण") । अत्र सुभ्रु-इदं ऊढि सिद्धो भवति । ऊढि त्वसति सुभ्रुरिति स्यात् ।' under 5. 2. 48; 'णिजर्थानवगती तु णिच् प्रयुज्यत एव । यथा "संयमयितुमारब्धः" (Ve. i, p. 20.—Here our reading is "संयन्तुमारब्धः") । under 5. 2. 77; and "पातितं वेत्स्यसि क्षितौ" (Ve. iii. 41.—Here our reading is "द्रक्ष्यसि") इत्यत्र वेत्स्यसीति न सिध्यति । इदमज्ञात् । आह । पदमज्ञात् सिध्यति । वेत्स्यसीति पदं भज्यते वेत्सि-असि । असित्वयं निपातस्त्वमित्यास्मिन्नर्थे ।' under 5. 2. 82.

- (4) These writers are in all nine viz. Vyāsa, the author of the Vāsavadattā, Bhaṭṭara Haricandra, Sātavāhana, Pravarasena, Bhūsa, Kālidāsa, the author of the Bṛhatkathā and Ādhyarāja. It will be noticed that one notable omission in this list is Vālmiki. Surely, the Rāmāyaṇa must have existed in Bāṇa's days and Vālmiki certainly deserved note. Why he was not mentioned we cannot say. That is why we have remarked above that this piece of evidence cannot be considered to be of a conclusive character.



Three other considerations confirm this conclusion. We have seen before that according to Bengal tradition Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa was the chief of the Kānyakubja Brāhmaṇas who had been invited to settle in that province by King Ādisūra. The date of Ādisūra is not definitely fixed. But he is regarded as the traditional progenitor of the Sena Dynasty, which according to Cunningham<sup>(u)</sup> reigned in Bengal between 650 and 1108 A. D. Ādisūra thus must have reigned in the latter half of the seventh century A. D. and Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa, who was his contemporary according to tradition, must consequently be assigned to the same period.

In Hiuen Tsang's account of his travels a king of Nepal of the name of Amśuvarman is mentioned. His sister Bhogadevi was married to a Prince Sūrasena. This Sūrasena is identified with Ādisūra, the founder of the Sena Dynasty. Amśuvarman is known to have ruled about 644-652 A. D.<sup>(v)</sup> This gives the latter half of the seventh century as the period of Ādisūra and consequently that of our poet.

The second consideration which confirms this date is derived from contemporary history. We have seen before that religious persecution was the reason that induced Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa and his associates to migrate from Kānyakubja to Bengal. It has also been shown above that Buddhism was in the ascendant in Kānyakubja in the second half of the seventh century. This consequently must have been the period in which our author migrated to

(u) See Reports of the Archæological Survey of India by Cunningham, Vol. XV, Appendix: Note on the History of Bengal.

(v) See Beal's Buddhist Records of the Western World, Vol.

II, p. 81, foot-note 102.



Bengal from Kānyakubja where the practice of the ancient Vedic religion of sacrifice, involving slaughter of animals, must have been forbidden.

The third consideration refers to the style and the general construction of the drama. These indicate that Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa belonged to what may be styled the age of Bhavabhūti<sup>(w)</sup>. Bhavabhūti flourished towards the end of the seventh and the beginning of the eighth century, that is, some time between 675 and 725 A. D. It cannot be known whether Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa was a predecessor, contemporary or successor of Bhavabhūti. But we shall not be wrong if we assign him to the second half of the seventh century.

From the above it will be seen that various considerations point to the second half of the seventh century as the date of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa.

A few other matters connected with this topic may be mentioned before concluding this section.

The Kṣitīsavamśāvalīcarita contains the history of the dynasty of which Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa is supposed to be the founder. We therefore naturally look to this book for determining the date of our poet. But as we remarked above chronicles of this kind do not possess much historical value. This is proved by the date which the Kṣitīsavamśāvalīcarita gives for Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa. According to this work King Ādisūra settled Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa and his associates in his kingdom in the Śaka year 999, which is 1077 A. D.<sup>(x)</sup> As Vāmaṇa, who flourished in the latter half of

(w) For comparison of the two poets in matters of style etc. vide below Section X 'Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa and Bhavabhūti.'

(x) Read 'इति श्रुत्वा तेन ब्राह्मणेन सार्धं दूतान् प्रेष्य बहुमानपुरःसरं भट्टनारायणदक्ष-  
श्रीहर्षछाण्डववेदगर्भसंज्ञकान्.....आनीय नवनवत्यधिकनवशतीशकाद्वे प्रागुप-  
कल्पितवासे निवेशयामास।' क्षितीशवंशावलिचरित' p. 2



the eighth century A. D., quotes from the *Veṇīśambhāra*, eleventh century can obviously not be accepted as the date of our author. Rejendra Lal Mitra's 1072 A. D. as the correct date of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa has also to be rejected for the same reason.

Wilson gives 'about the eighth or ninth century' as the probable period of the composition of the *Veṇīśambhāra*. If the expression 'about the eighth' means the period comprising, say, 675 to 725 A. D., Wilson is right. Ninth century is of course out of question for the same reason which rules out the date given by the *Kṣitīśaṁśāvalīcarita*. At the same time it must be confessed that Wilson's fixing the date of the *Veṇīśambhāra* as 'about the eighth or ninth century' was certainly admirable, for we must remember that he wrote more than a hundred years ago,<sup>(y)</sup> when materials for discussing such problems were extremely scanty.

We now quote Wilson's remarks on this question. Says he, 'There is nothing in the play to furnish a clue to its date. It is frequently cited in the *Kāvya-Prakāśa*, the *Daśa-Rūpaka*, and *Sāhitya-Darpana*, to which works it is consequently anterior. According to tradition, the author, Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa, was one of the Kanouj Brāhmanas invited into Bengal by Ādi-Sura, from whom the Brāhmanas of that province are descended: he was of the Śāṇḍilya family. Ādi-Sura is supposed to have reigned three centuries before our era; but if we may place any dependence on Abulfazl's list of Bengal kings, he was the twenty-second prince in ascent from Belāl Sen, who, it is well known, reigned in the thirteenth century. Assigning then the moderate dura-

(y) The first edition of Wilson's well-known work 'Select Specimens of the Theatre of the Hindus' was published in 1827.



tion of about three hundred years to these intermediate princes, and admitting the tradition with respect to Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa, the Venī-samhāra might have been written about the eighth or ninth century: a period not at all incompatible with the comparative harshness of its style and the rudeness of its execution, particularly if we conclude, agreeably to tradition, that it was among the earliest results of the introduction of Brahmanical literature into Bengal<sup>(z)</sup>.

Julius Grill in the *Kritische Einleitung* (Critical Introduction)<sup>(a)</sup> to his edition of the Venīsamhāra, published in 1871, discusses the question of the date of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa and comes to the conclusion that our poet must have lived in the sixth or seventh century A. D.

Max Müller suggested<sup>(b)</sup> that Bhadrānārāyaṇa, who is mentioned in the *Harsacarita* as a companion of Bāṇa in his wanderings was identical with Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa. This makes our poet a contemporary of Bāṇa.

(z) 'Theatre of the Hindus' Vol. II, p. 343-344. In the above quotation proper names have been transliterated according to modern system.

(a) English translation of Grill's *Kritische Einleitung* by L. R. Vaidya was published in his edition of the Venīsamhāra by N. B. Godbole (1895) under the heading 'Ink Memorandum by L. R. Vaidya.'

(b) Max Müller's suggestion was as a matter of fact based on inaccurate reading of the passage concerned. Among the companions of Bāṇa's wanderings are mentioned 'ब्रह्मविन्दो रुद्रनारायणो.' रुद्रनारायणो was evidently mis-read by Max Müller as मद्रनारायणो, which he suggested was



## 3 THE WORKS OF BHATṬA NĀRĀYAṆA

The Venīsamhāra is the only work of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa that is at present known to us. But there are reasons to believe that he must have written other works as well. In the Introduction to the Venīsamhāra some Mss. speak of the drama as 'a new composition'<sup>(c)</sup> of the poet. This means that Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa was the author of some other drama or dramas. What this drama or these dramas were that preceded the composition of the Venīsamhāra we have no means of finding out in the present state of our knowledge.

The Daśakumāracarita, which goes under the name of Daṇḍin, is known to be the work of more than one author<sup>(d)</sup>. It consists of the Pūrvapīṭhikā, the Daśakumāracarita (proper) and the Uttarapīṭhikā or Śeṣa. Of these only the Daśakumāracarita (proper) is the work of Daṇḍin. Two versions<sup>(e)</sup> of the Pūrvapīṭhikā are at present available. From a stanza occurring at the end of a Ms. of the second, but little known, version we learn that it is the work of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa and that the scribe Hariśarma wrote it,

(c) See Grill's edition, p. 129, where the readings 'अभिनवकृतिम्' and 'कृतिमभिनवाम्' for 'कृतिम्' in the passage 'मृदुनारायणस्य कृतिं वेणीसंहारं नाम नाटकं प्रयोक्तुमुद्यता वयम्' (p. 3 our edition) are given.

(d) Vide Section X entitled 'The Authors of the Daśakumāracarita' from the Introduction to our edition of the Daśakumāracarita.

(e) The first and well-known version is the one that is usually printed in the current editions of the Daśakumāracarita. The second version was unknown till 1919, when it was published as an Appendix by the late Mr. G. J. Agashe to the Second Revised Edition of the Daśakumāracarita in the Bombay Sanskrit and Prakṛit Series.



because he could not secure the original Pūrvapīṭhikā of Daṇḍin<sup>(f)</sup>. Now no other poet bearing the name Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa is known. So we may presume that this Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa is identical with our author. This means that besides the Veṇīśaṁhāra our author wrote a Pūrvapīṭhikā to complete the incomplete Daśakumāracarita of Daṇḍin.

Vallabhadeva (about the fifteenth century) quotes in his Subhāṣitāvali seven stanzas under the name Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa, and one more under the name Nārāyaṇa, which also is considered by Peterson to belong to our author. Out of these eight stanzas<sup>(g)</sup> only one viz. No. 79 occurs in the Veṇīśaṁhāra as one of the three stanzas<sup>(h)</sup>, which constitute the Nāndī according to some Mss. These three stanzas are not incorporated in the text of any of the printed editions, but are always noted as variants to three others which are recognised as forming the proper Nāndī of the drama. Now these seven stanzas, which Vallabhadeva quotes as Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's, must have come from some other work or works of our author, which are at present unknown to us.

Śārṅgadharā (1363 A. D.) in his anthology known as Śārṅgadharapaddhati quotes nine stanzas<sup>(i)</sup> under the name

(f) Read

भट्टनारायणकृतं पूर्वपृथक्चान्तदर्शनम् ।

अत्राप्य दृष्टिद्वयवृत्तिं हरिश्चामो व्यलीलितम् ॥

—दशकुमारचरित Appendix p. 155 (Bombay Sanskrit Series)

(g) All stanzas which are attributed to our author in anthologies, but which are not found in the extant text of the Veṇīśaṁhāra, are collected in Appendix A to this book.

(h) For these three stanzas see Notes p. 10 of our edition of the Veṇīśaṁhāra.

(i) See stanzas Nos. 173, 3972, 3981, 4073, 4074, 4081, 4085, 4086 and 4088 from the Śārṅgadharapaddhati.



Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa and these are all found in the *Veṇīsaṁhāra*. He has again quoted two stanzas<sup>(j)</sup> more, which in other anthologies are found under the name of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa. One of these is the same as No. 79 of the *Subhāṣitāvalī*, which we have seen forms one of the three stanzas that constitute a variant *Nāṇḍī*. The other is not found in the extant text of the *Veṇīsaṁhāra*, but is supposed to occur in a Telugu Ms. of the play.

A drama, called *Jānakīpariṇaya*, is mentioned in a catalogue of Mss. as the work of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa<sup>(k)</sup>. Not having seen the Ms., we are unable to say whether this Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa is the same as our author. If he be the same, the *Jānakīpariṇaya* would be another drama of our author.

#### 4. ANOTHER NAME OF BHATTA NĀRĀYAṆA

Nārāyaṇa is a very common name in India and Bhaṭṭa is an honorific title implying eminence in learning. Bhaṭṭa is specially assumed by those who achieve distinction in *Alaṁkārasāstra* or the science of rhetoric. Numerous writers of the name of Nārāyaṇa are known. Aufrecht in his *Catalogus Catalogorum* mentions quite a number of them. But Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa appears to be the exclusive name of the author of the *Veṇīsaṁhāra*.

We have seen before that the *Sāringadharapaddhati* quotes nine stanzas from the *Veṇīsaṁhāra* under the name Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa. This indicates that Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa was sometimes referred to as Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa as well. This latter form of the name can however not be regarded

(j) These are stanzas Nos. 135 and 4009. For these see Appendix A.

(k) See Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts in Mysore and



as exclusive, for writers bearing the name Nārāyaṇa might be called Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa as a mark of honour and are actually so called.

Mention has been made above of two other stanzas of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa that are quoted in the Śārṅgadharapaddhati. Now these stanzas are quoted by Śārṅgadharā under the name Nisā-Nārāyaṇa. One of these stanzas viz. Uttiṣṭhantya ratānte etc. has been quoted by Vallabhadeva in his Subhāṣitāvali under the name Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa. This leaves no doubt in our mind as to whom Śārṅgadharā means by Nisā-Nārāyaṇa. He certainly refers to our author by that name. Nisā-Nārāyaṇa then is the other name of the author of the Venīsamhāra.

Why Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa was called Nisā-Nārāyaṇa is not known. But it looks as if he was so called because in some stanza of his the word Nisā occurred prominently. What this stanza was is again not known. The Śārṅgadharapaddhati mentions a poet called Nidrā-daridra, who evidently received that epithet because he used that expression prominently in a stanza of his<sup>(l)</sup>. Two more cases of such nick-names may be quoted. According to some people Bhavabhūti was a title of the author of the Uttararāmacarita, whose real name, they say, was Śrīkaṇṭha<sup>(m)</sup>. But

- (l) That stanza runs as follows: It is No. 3454 of the Śārṅgadharapaddhati.

जाने कोपपराङ्मुखी प्रियतमा स्वमेव दृष्टा मया  
मा मां संस्पृश पाणिनेति रुदतीं गन्तुं प्रवृत्ता ततः ।  
नो यावत् परिरम्य चादुक्कशितेराश्रयासयामि क्षणं  
भ्रातस्तावदहं शटेन विधिना निद्रादग्निः कृतः ॥

- (m) We do not hold this view. To say so is, we believe, completely to misunderstand the words in the following passage: 'नलिकण्ठस्थारमसंभवः श्रीकण्ठपदलाञ्छनः पदवाक्यप्रमाणज्ञो भवभूतिर्नाम जतुकर्णीपुत्रः' महावीरचरित—प्रस्तावना. Here the words नाम and लाञ्छन are quite decisive. They show that Bhavabhūti is the name and Śrīkaṇṭha the title of the poet.



he gained this title because he composed a line in which the word Bhavabhūti figured prominently<sup>(n)</sup>. Ācārya Dikṣita, the grand-father of Appayya Dikṣita, was known by the title Vakṣasthalācārya. King Kṛṣṇa Deva Rāya of Vijayanagara (1509-1530 A. D.) once visited Kāñci. As he sat before the idol of Varada (a name of Viṣṇu) in company with his wife, worshipping the deity, Ācārya Dikṣita composed a stanza, which contained a flattering reference to the beauty of Kṛṣṇa Deva Rāya's queen<sup>(o)</sup>. This pleased the Vijayanagara king so much that he decreed that the author be thence-forward known as Vakṣasthalācārya.

- (n) The line, which according to some secured for Śrīkaṇṭha the title Bhavabhūti, is either 'साम्बा पुनानु भवभूतिपवित्रधूर्तिः' or 'गिरिजायाः कुचौ बन्दे भवभूतिसिताननौ.' It seems clear that these lines arose after the name rather than the name sprang from the lines.

- (o) This stanza runs as follows :

काचित् काञ्चनगौराङ्गी वीक्ष्य साक्षादिव श्रियम् ।

वरदः संज्ञयापन्नो वक्षःस्थलमेवैक्षत ॥

The significance of the stanza will be understood if we remember that Viṣṇu is supposed to have Lakṣmī permanently residing on his chest. When therefore the God saw before him a lady, who seemed to be Lakṣmī incarnate, he wondered whether the Goddess had left her usual place and looked at his chest to make sure that she was there. The ultimate idea in the stanza is that the queen was so like Lakṣmī that even Varada mistook her for his wife.

## II THE DRAMA

### 1 THE TITLE OF THE DRAMA

Venīsamhāra<sup>(p)</sup>, the title of this drama, means the tying up or rearrangement of the loose dishevelled mass of hair. It has reference to the vow of Bhīmasena, which forms the central topic of the drama. In suggesting to us the nature of this vow Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa has introduced a change of far-reaching consequence in the original account of the Mahābhārata and in order to call special attention to this change we are devoting a separate section to this title.

In that notorious gambling match between the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas, Yudhiṣṭhira lost all his wealth and possessions owing to the deceitful tricks of Śakuni. Ultimately he staked himself and his brothers and even his wife and when he was defeated in the game once more, the Pāṇḍavas and their queen became the slaves of the Kauravas. Duryodhana thereupon ordered Draupadī to be brought into the assembly. She refused on the ground that she was not in a fit condition to go there. Duryodhana then sent his brother Duśśāsana to bring her. He dragged her by her hair into the hall in spite of her protestations and pulled her only garment in his attempt to strip her naked. Duryodhana had already bared his thigh and showed it to the Pāṇcāla princess, intimating thereby his desire that she should occupy it. Bhīmasena's ire was roused. By all the holy things in the world he vowed that for those indignities

(p) There are three grammatical and three exegetical explanations of the title Venīsamhāram. For these see Notes to our edition, pp. 1-4.



heaped upon Draupadī he would tear open the chest of Duśśāsana and drink his blood and that he would break the thighs of Duryodhana with his mace, kick him on his head and *with his hands smeared with the blood of Duryodhana rearrange the dishevelled hair of Draupadī, who was therefore to allow her hair to remain in that disordered condition till he fulfilled his vow.* It is to this latter part of Bhīmasena's vow, concerning the rearrangement of Draupadī's dishevelled hair with hands gory with Duryodhana's blood, that reference is made in the title of the drama.

We desire to point out here that that particular portion of Bhīmasena's vow (printed in *Italics* above), which is referred to in the title of the drama, finds no sanction in the Mahābhārata. There is no reference to it in the Sabhāparvan, which describes the gambling, the dragging into the assembly of Draupadī and the various vows of the Pāṇḍava princes. In the ~~Śalya~~ <sup>Śalya</sup>parvan also, which describes the slaughter of Duryodhana by Bhīmasena, we find no mention of Draupadī's dishevelled hair being tied by Bhīmasena with hands smeared with Duryodhana's blood. Further, in the description of the life the Pāṇḍavas led in the forest and in the capital of Virāṭa there is no reference to Draupadī's allowing her hair to continue disordered with a view to their being ultimately rearranged by Bhīmasena in the manner stated above. From the Sabhāparvan onwards Bhīmasena has repeated his vow on many occasions, but nowhere is there any reference to his having vowed to rearrange Draupadī's dishevelled hair with hands stained with Duryodhana's blood. It would therefore appear that this part of Bhīmasena's vow is Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's own addition and it is easy to see that from the dramatic point of view it is of the utmost importance. But this fact does not appear to have struck any of the previous editors or

*annotators of the drama.*



That this addition of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa to Bhīmasena's vow has had immense influence on subsequent literature and on people's ideas about this episode from the Mahābhārata can be easily seen. Numerous dramas dealing with the life of Draupadī and of the Pāṇḍavas subsequent to the incidents of the Sabhāparvan have been written in modern Indian languages. And everywhere Draupadī has been depicted as allowing her hair to hang loosely on her back, because she was not to tie them up till Bhīmasena killed Duryodhana and rearranged them with hands gory with his blood. On the stage whenever Draupadī appears, her hair hang loosely on her back. People are hardly aware that this condition of Draupadī is due to Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's innovation and that the Mahābhārata knows nothing about it. On the contrary the general belief is that in the Mahābhārata itself Bhīmasena's vow was exactly as Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa depicts it to be. Such has been the tremendous influence of the Venīsamhāra on men's ideas about the Mahābhārata.

A similar case may be quoted to illustrate how a dramatist's work influences people's ideas about historical facts. Shakespeare portrays Henry V as his ideal man of action. English boys and girls learn their English history more from Shakespeare's dramas than from regular history books. Consequently they have grand ideas about Henry V, but we know that history has a different verdict to bring about this monarch.

We now proceed to give a summary of the drama act by act and add to it our critical appreciation.

## 2 SUMMARY OF THE PROLOGUE

At the beginning of the drama we have the Prastāvanā or the Prologue, which commences with the usual maṅgala, here consisting of three stanzas. Two of these are in



glorification of Lord Viṣṇu, while the third is in praise of Siva. After this the Sūtradhāra enters and offers his own salutation to Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana Vyāsa, the author of the Bhārata. He then informs the audience that he is going to represent Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's drama, the Veniśamhara, and requests that attention be paid to his performance either out of regard for the labours of the poet, or out of reverence for the sublime plot, or out of curiosity to witness a new drama.

Just at this moment the Pāripārśvika, Assistant of the Sūtradhāra, announces to him from behind the curtain the command of Vidura, issued to all actors, to open festivities forthwith; for it is the time for the arrival of Lord Kṛṣṇa, who has, through desire for the good of the family of Bharata, assumed the role of a mediator and is about to start for Duryodhana's camp with the intention of negotiating peace. The Sūtradhāra is glad to learn this news and asks his Assistant to begin the concert.

The Pāripārśvika now enters and inquires to which season the song should refer. The Sūtradhāra replies that it should refer to the autumn and himself proceeds to describe it. His description of the season, owing to its double-meaning phraseology, suggests the fall of the Dhārtarāṣṭras. The Assistant is much agitated by this suggestion. The Sūtradhāra points out to him the other meaning of his words and in order further to allay his perturbation invokes blessing on the Kauravas in another double-meaning stanza. This brings on him from behind the curtain a severe rebuke from Bhīmasena, for he cannot stand peace with the hated Kauravas, who have wronged the Pāṇḍavas and their queen so grievously, and therefore does not like Kṛṣṇa's mediation. The Sūtradhāra and his Assistant immediately quit the stage in order to escape from the gaze of the enraged Bhīmasena, whose entrance is thus cleverly intimated.



## 3 CRITICAL APPRECIATION OF THE PROLOGUE

The dramatic purpose of a Prologue is briefly to introduce the poet and the play and to prepare the audience for witnessing the piece to follow. Before the play actually starts the audience becomes very impatient and sometimes even rowdy and there is a lot of noise created in the theatre. The Prastāvanā must be able to quiet the audience and capture its attention. With this view dramatists often introduce singing, or create expectations thereof in the mind of the audience by referring to it, for singing exercises such fascinating influence over the human mind. Thus in the Śākuntala while the assembly is still under the influence of the Natī's enchanting melody, Duṣyanta enters and the play begins. Here also we find that just after the formal introduction of the poet is over, expectations of a musical concert are raised by the announcement of the Pāripāśyika and while the audience eagerly looks up to it, the Sūtradhāra makes a sensational reference to the fall of the Dhārtarāṣṭras in his description of the autumn to which the song is to pertain. The attention of the assembly is thus diverted in an altogether different channel and the dialogue between the Sūtradhāra and his Assistant is eagerly listened to. The entrance of Bhīmasena is again very cleverly effected by means of another paronomastic stanza and the play begins. The interest of the audience is thus nowhere allowed to flag.

Another characteristic of the Prastāvanā is that it should be short. Some dramatists make it unnaturally long by introducing all kinds of discussions in it. A long-drawn Prastāvanā<sup>(q)</sup> tires the audience which has a right to say that it has assembled to witness the drama and not

(q) See for example the Prastāvanā of the Prasannarāghava, which contains no less than twenty-three stanzas.



to listen to the views of the poet on sundry matters, or to hear an exaggerated account of his greatness and learning. Kālidāsa's Prastāvanā to his Śākuntala is an ideal one from this point of view. The present Prastāvanā appears a little too long. But that was inevitable. For, this Prastāvanā is more than a Prologue proper. It unites in it the characteristics of a Viṣkambhaka as well. The plot of this drama is taken from the Mahābhārata, the story in which is so long that it was absolutely necessary to inform the audience where exactly the action of the drama began. This necessitated a few more speeches than would otherwise have been necessary. It is to be noted that Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa has constructed his Prastāvanā with great skill. There is nothing unnatural about it and it satisfies all the requirements so admirably.

Reading between the lines of the Prastāvanā one is always able to form some ideas regarding the dramatist's position in the literary world. This Prastāvanā does not reveal Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa as having attained any very great literary eminence. He does not even appear to feel sure that the audience would give him a patient hearing. He has therefore to plead, more or less helplessly, even like Kālidāsa in his Vikramorvaśīyam, that attention may, for one reason or another, be kindly paid to his performance.<sup>(r)</sup> There seems to be no doubt that when Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa wrote this passage, he had Kālidāsa's Vikramorvaśīya stanza before him. Kālidāsa's influence on Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa is visible in this Prastāvanā in another place also. When the Pārīpārsvika enters, he asks the Sūtradhāra, 'Concerning which season should the song be sung?' The

(r) With Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's 'तदत्र कविपरिश्रमाबुद्धेर्धाद्रा उदात्तकथावस्तु-  
गौरवाद्वा नयनाटकदर्शनकुतुहलाद्वा मयश्चिरवधानं दयिमानमभ्यर्थये' compare  
Kālidāsa's 'प्रणयिषु वा दाक्षिण्यादथवा सद्गस्तुषु रूषवद्गुमानात् । श्रुणुत न नो-  
मिष्वहितैः क्रियामिमां कालिदासस्य' V. i. 2.

Sūtradhāra answers by saying that the song should refer to the autumn, which has just set in. All this appears to be almost an exact copy of the dialogue between the Sūtradhāra and the Naṭī in the Śākuntala.<sup>(s)</sup>

A dramatic Prastāvanā is, according to writers on rhetoric, of five kinds. The Prastāvanā of the Venīsamhāra belongs to the Kathodghāta type, which is one of these five.<sup>(u)</sup> The Kathodghāta Prastāvanā is that in which a character makes his entrance on the stage, repeating a sentence of the Sūtradhāra or making reference to what the Sūtradhāra has said. In the Venīsamhāra Bhīmasena enters, repeating a few words of the Sūtradhāra and expressing his resentment at the general tenor of the Sūtradhāra's stanza.<sup>(u)</sup> The Prastāvanās of the Ratnāvalī and the Mudrārākṣasa also belong to this Kathodghāta type.

(s) Compare the following :—

नटी—अयं कृतं पुनर्कृतुमधिकृत्य गास्यामि ।

सूत्रधारः—नन्वमुमेव तावद्विरप्रवृत्तमुपभोगक्षमं ग्रीष्मसमयमधिकृत्य गीयताम् ।  
संप्रति हि ।

—अभिज्ञानशाकुन्तल i

पारियात्रिजः—भवतु । आरम्भयामि । कृतं समयमाश्रित्य गीयताम् ।

सूत्रधारः—नन्वमुमेव तावत्.....शरत्समयमाश्रित्य प्रवर्त्यतां संगीतकम् ।  
तथा ह्यस्यां शरदि ।

—वेणीसंहार i

(t) Read

उद्घातकः कथोद्घातः प्रयोगातिशयस्तथा ।

प्रवर्तकावगलिते पञ्च प्रस्तावनाभिद्ः ॥ 33

सूत्रधारस्य वाक्यं वा समादायार्थमस्य वा ।

भवेत् पात्रप्रवेशश्चेत् कथोद्घातः स उच्यते ॥ 35

—साहित्यदर्पण vi

(u) The Sūtradhāra says in i. 7d 'स्वस्था भवन्तु कुरुराजसुताः समस्थाः'. Bhīmasena's words in i. 8d are 'स्वस्था भवन्ति मयि जीवति चार्तराष्ट्रः'.



## 4 SUMMARY OF ACT i

The Pāṇḍavas have fulfilled the condition of twelve years' residence in the forest and further one year's residence *incognito*. Duryodhana is yet unwilling to restore to them their legitimate share of kingdom. Both sides prepare for war. The pious Yudhiṣṭhira becomes alarmed at the prospect of the impending calamity and a last attempt to settle matters amicably is determined upon. Lord Śrīkrṣṇa is chosen as the mediator of peace and he has already departed on his mission. Everybody is looking forward to the expected peace with a feeling of relief. But Prince Bhīmasena is of another mind. He cannot stand peace with the hated Kauravas and consequently does not like the Lord's departure for Duryodhana's camp. His ire is roused when he finds the Sūtradhāra exulting in the prospect of peace and in a mood of bitter resentment he makes his entrance on the stage, followed by his beloved brother Sahadeva, and the drama proper begins.

Sahadeva tries to allay the anger of Bhīmasena, but Bhīmasena is not in a mood to listen to any argument. He is even ready to revolt against the authority of Yudhiṣṭhira and wants to destroy the Kauravas single-handed. In rage he starts for the armoury, for which he mistakes Draupadi's quadrangle. On being reminded of his mistake, he decides to wait for the Queen's arrival, for he wants to take leave of her before embarking upon the task of effecting his fell revenge. Sahadeva in the meanwhile tries to explain to him the circumstances under which and the motive with which Yudhiṣṭhira made his overtures of peace and informs him of the condition *viz.* the grant of five villages, on which peace is sought to be effected. Bhīmasena flouts his words, and being most painfully surprised at Yudhiṣṭhira's low demand, absolutely refuses to associate himself with such peace.



At this juncture Draupadī makes her entrance. Tears are rising in her eyes. Sahadeva fears that her sight would add fuel to the already blazing fire of Bhīmasena's anger. And what had happened was this. Draupadī along with her co-wives had gone to pay customary obeisance to Gāndhārī. On her way back she was seen by Duryodhana's wife Bhānumatī, who made a cruel and insulting reference to her loose hair which, she said, must now be tied, in view of the peace that the Pāṇḍavas were striving to bring about by means of only five villages. This is too much for the already excited Bhīmasena, who, while impatiently rising from his seat, declares that in a short time he will break the thighs of Duryodhana and tie up Draupadī's hair with hands gory with his blood.

Behind the curtain a great noise is heard and a drum is loudly beaten. A Chamberlain enters in haste and informs Bhīmasena that Lord Kṛṣṇa has returned, his mission having proved unsuccessful, and that Yudhiṣṭhira has ordered hostilities to be commenced forthwith. Taking an affectionate farewell of their Queen, Bhīmasena and Sahadeva then depart in order to have an interview with Kṛṣṇa and Yudhiṣṭhira.

## 5 CRITICAL APPRECIATION OF ACT i

The first Act of the Venīsamhāra is from the dramatic point of view highly successful. Except for two matters<sup>(v)</sup>

- (v) The first is connected with the use of the word कृष्णगमनम् in the passage 'अत्रोपविश्यार्थः पालयतु कृष्णगमनम्' p. 10 (Text). For the objectionable feature in this passage see pp. 36-37 Notes. The second point refers to the significance that Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa attaches to Yudhiṣṭhira's demand of five villages and that is explained to Bhīmasena by Sahadeva on pp. 13-14 (Text). For the confusion which Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa has created in the explanation of this significance see pp. 42-44 (Notes).



There is here nothing defective. Rules of Sanskrit dramaturgy do not allow the division of an Act into scenes. An Act constitutes so to say one long scene, for the stage is not to be left vacant during its course. Yet it is always possible for the purposes of criticism to look upon an Act as made of a certain number of scenes and the dramatist's skill of plot-construction lies in the way in which he weaves these scenes together so as to create the impression of a consistent Act, free from all artificialities.

The first Act consists of three scenes. The first scene contains the conversation between Bhīmasena and Sahadeva and ends with stanza 14. The second is very small and is made up by the short dialogue between Draupadī and her maid and closes with Draupadī's decision to stay in a secluded place and listen to what Bhīmasena has to say in his angry mood. The third scene is the longest in the Act and extends from Bhīmasena's speech at the bottom of p. 12 to the end of the Act on p. 24.

It will be seen that these three scenes have been very cleverly managed. They follow one another with logical precision. The way in which Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa has brought about the meeting of Bhīmasena and Draupadī is so skilful. Enraged at Yudhiṣṭhira's attempts to make peace and determined on breaking loose from his authority and on wrecking his vengeance single-handed, Bhīmasena naturally turns his steps toward the armoury, where he wants to provide himself with his terrible mace. But rage deceives him regarding the exact locality of the arsenal and he finds himself before Draupadī's quadrangle. This is a very fine and natural touch. As his revolt against Yudhiṣṭhira's authority proceeds from his high regard for Draupadī, whose wrongs he intends to avenge, it is quite natural that he should desire to bid farewell to her before embarking on his mission. He is therefore glad to realise his mistake and



tries to see the Queen. All this is so natural. Then again the way in which in spite of himself, Bhīmasena is led to inquire about the condition on which peace is sought to be effected viz. the introduction of the expression Kṛṣṇāgamaṇam, marks the poet's skill. The anger into which Bhīmasena flies, when he learns the condition of five villages, so natural in itself, is very cleverly exploited by the poet to serve a dramatic purpose. Draupadī is now to enter and a difficulty arises viz. What are Bhīmasena and Sahadeva to do on the stage during the time taken by the dialogue between Draupadī and her maid, which forms the second scene in this Act? Are they to stand still on the stage, blankly looking about here and there? This would have been highly inartistic. Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa therefore very ingeniously makes Bhīmasena turn his face away from Sahadeva in anger and represents him as keeping silent for a time, because, overpowered by rage, he is as it were struck dumb. Sahadeva stands looking at him, wondering what he would say. In the meanwhile the conversation between Draupadī and her maid is over and they purposely station themselves in a corner to observe the doings of Bhīmasena. It will thus be seen that the whole situation has been managed with great skill.

Further on when the account of the fresh insult suffered by Draupadī is related and Bhīmasena in impatience rises from his seat and makes a solemn declaration of killing Duryodhana in a very short time, the reader begins to wonder what next will follow and whether Bhīmasena will really set Yudhiṣṭhira's authority at naught, as looks quite probable. But just in time the drum is loudly beaten behind the curtain and the Chamberlain enters to announce to Bhīmasena the failure of Kṛṣṇa's mission of peace. This saves Bhīmasena from a rather awkward situation that has been created by his own solemn declaration of killing



Duryodhana in a very short time. For he can now proceed to do what he wants with full permission of his elder brother. Then again the scene where the Chamberlain reports the incident of Duryodhana's unsuccessful attempt to secure the person of Kṛṣṇa, which is marked by the reverential confusion in which Bhīmasena, Draupadī and Sahadeva are thrown at the mere mention of Kṛṣṇa's name, and the scene which depicts the parting between Bhīmasena and his loving Queen, amply illustrate Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's dramatic powers.

The hopeless confusion that Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa makes in the elaboration of what he terms the vyutpatti or significance of Yudhiṣṭhira's demand for five villages has been set forth in detail in our Notes pp. 42-44. In the Mahābhārata Yudhiṣṭhira is a pious man, who is really apprehensive of the impending destruction of his family and makes honest efforts to bring about peace and avoid war by preferring a very modest request for five villages. But Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa tries to make Yudhiṣṭhira a politician in addition. Thus not satisfied with merely entertaining pious hopes and taking action accordingly, the Yudhiṣṭhira of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa wants to make a display<sup>(w)</sup> of his pious heart before the world and tries to convince it that the moral guilt of the war with all its attendant evils lies on Duryodhana and not on him. This is evidently the politician's point of view and it is this which Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa wants to make out in that elaborate vyutpatti which Sahadeva so painfully explains to Bhīmasena. In the Mahābhā-

- (w) Read Sahadeva's words ' एवं कृते लोके तावत् स्वर्गोपपन्नो हृदयमाविष्कृतं भवति.' Here emphasis is to be laid on the word आविष्कृतम् (manifested, revealed). Yudhiṣṭhira is not satisfied by merely possessing a heart, apprehensive of the destruction of his family. He wants to manifest it to the world.



rata there is no significance whatsoever in Yudhiṣṭhira's demand for five villages. With a view to represent him as a politician in addition to being a pious man, Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa endows his message to Duryodhana with a certain significance, which Bhīmasena, not a politician by any means, naturally fails to understand. The politician's and the soldier's points of view, represented respectively by Sahadeva and Bhīmasena, have been very ably set forth in their conversation regarding this significance, and it is amusing to see how the soldier Bhīmasena by his plain words at once demolishes the elaborate structure of vyutpatti constructed by the politician Sahadeva. It will thus be seen that inspite of the confusion created, which Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa probably was quite unconscious of, the change he has introduced and the way in which he carries it out, reveal his ingenuity and skill and make the whole scene very effective from the dramatic point of view.

The main interest of this Act centres round the all-dominating figure of Bhīmasena, the conflict of emotions in whose mind it is very interesting to observe. Caught between two opposing duties, duty to his elder brother, who as a guru is to him always vāndya<sup>(x)</sup>, and duty to his beloved, whose wrongs he cannot allow to remain unavenged any longer, Bhīmasena presents a spectacle of absorbing interest. For thirteen long years, out of reverence for his elder brother, he has slept over the various humiliations received, with eager but subdued expectations of ultimately being able to have his full revenge. But this new move on Yudhiṣṭhira's part, of arranging peace through the intercession of Kṛṣṇa for the paltry consideration of five villages, seems to shatter for ever his cherished dreams of bloody revenge. He can clearly see that peace with the

(x) Compare Bhīmasena's words 'वन्द्याः सख्यः' p. 17 (Text).



accursed Kauravas at this juncture means the abjuration of all his solemn vows and the non-fulfilment of his sacred promise to Draupadi to bind her hair with hands gory with Duryodhana's blood. The thought of all this is so repugnant to him that in rage he becomes ready to revolt against Yudhiṣṭhira's authority and seek his revenge single-handed. The report of a fresh insult suffered by Draupadi seems to complete his severance from his brothers and in impatience he rises up as though to rush immediately at Duryodhana's throat. But fortunately the announcement of the failure of Kṛṣṇa's mission of peace comes in time to save him from the awkward situation of having to go against the desires of his elder brother, whom he has followed all these long years with absolute devotion.

This picture of Bhīmasena's mental state is no doubt extremely interesting, but what is still more interesting to observe is the sting of conscience which inspite of himself he feels in adopting the course he intends to follow. He is conscious that he will incur sin and censure, but in rage declares he is prepared to suffer them. When calmed down a little he begins to speak in somewhat apologetic tones and seems to suggest that his violent words proceeded from the torment caused to him by Yudhiṣṭhira's attempt to arrange peace. He inquires sympathetically regarding the condition on which peace is sought to be effected and it looks as though he will consent to peace, if it is made for adequate consideration. But the degrading nature of Yudhiṣṭhira's demand, coupled with the report of a fresh insult suffered by Draupadi, inflame him once more and his impatience knows no bounds. The remarks of Draupadi here and there are also significant in this connection<sup>(y)</sup>.

- (y) Compare 'हजे दुद्धिमतिके, भवत्येतयादि महाराजः प्रतिदुलो न भवेत्' pp. 11-12, 'नाथ न लज्जन्त पते । त्वमपि तावन्मा विस्मयीः ।' p. 15 and 'किं नाथ दुष्करं त्वया परिकल्पितेन । सर्वथादुगृह्यन्वेतद्वचसितं ते भ्रातरः' p. 19.



They clearly show that the princess is quite confident of Bhīmasena's capacity to achieve everything he has promised, but appears to be equally certain that he will not go against Yudhiṣṭhira's desire even inspite of his violent words and apparent readiness to do so. Her constant prayer therefore is that Bhīmasena's brothers and especially Yudhiṣṭhira may not prove antagonistic to his determination. It will thus be seen that Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa has done extremely well in presenting to us this absorbing picture of Bhīmasena, which reveals his dramatic genius no less than his skill.

Out of the other characters presented to us in this Act Draupadī is the most important. A princess of blood royal by birth, endowed with the most matchless beauty, she is subjected to humiliations of the worst type inspite of her valiant husbands. Her miseries seem to have even changed her princely disposition and a strain of cynicism and hopelessness is clearly noticeable in her short pithy sentences. Her affectionate heart and her feverish anxiety for the safety of her husbands are very well brought out in that small scene of leave-taking at the end of the Act. Here Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa clearly displays his intimate knowledge of a woman's and a wife's heart. Though always wishing, and wishing with a fervour that miseries and humiliations of the kind she has suffered can alone generate, that her husbands should declare war and avenge her wrongs, she grows extremely nervous about their safety, when war is actually declared, and fears that they may endanger their lives out of regard for her. With a beating heart she therefore implores them not to do so. Altogether this much-wronged daughter of epic India, with hair loose and her face stamped with dejection, excites our pity and we heave a sigh of relief, when towards the end of the Act we learn that her days of misery are over and that happiness, which she richly deserves, is in store for her.



Sahadeva and Buddhimatikā deserve some notice. But of these Sahadeva is a mere non-entity. His only qualification is that he is most loved by Bhīmasena and that is why Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa brings him on the stage. He has no individuality and no marked characteristics. He represents the view of Yudhiṣṭhira and serves as an excellent foil to Bhīmasena. But even he is so much impressed by Bhīmasena's words that on the spot he promises support to his undertaking on behalf of himself and his brothers, when yet he does not know the result of Kṛṣṇa's mission of peace. Buddhimatikā on the other hand is far more interesting. Smart, clever and ready-witted, she is just the kind of servants that were attached to royal households in ancient India. Inspired with dignified loyalty towards her mistress, she makes quite a spirited reply to Bhānumatī's mean attack and deservedly wins the applause of Bhīmasena. When on firm ground, she hesitates not in snubbing even the angry Bhīmasena<sup>(a)</sup>, for she knows very well that this snub will ultimately gratify him.

## 6 SUMMARY OF PRELUDE TO ACT ii

Vinayandhara, the Chamberlain of Duryodhana, is searching for Queen Bhānumatī. He is an old man, infirm with age, and lives in the harem more as a matter of form than for any active service. Yet he has been commanded by His Majesty to find out quickly whether the Queen has returned from her customary duty of bowing to the feet of Gāndhārī. For, before Duryodhana proceeds to the field of battle to congratulate Karna, Jayadratha and others on

(a) Read :—

भीमसेनः—बुद्धिमतिकं, ततो देव्या किमभिहितम् ।

चेटी—कुमार, यदि परिजनहाना भवेत्तदा देवी भणति ।

भीमसेनः—किं पुनरभिहितं भवत्या ।

—वेणीसंहार i p. 18

See for the snub p. 51 (Notes)



their slaughter of Abhimanyu, he wants to see his Queen. On inquiry with a palace maid, Vihāṅgikā by name, Vinayandhara learns that Bhānumatī has returned from Gāndhārī's abode and is staying in the Bālodyāna, because she has from that day begun the practice of a religious observance with a view to ensure victory in battle to her husband.

The Chamberlain is struck at the contrast between the mentalities of the wife and the husband, for while the former realises the seriousness of the situation arising from the war that is proceeding, the latter is yet engrossed in sensual pleasures, when the Vāsudeva-helped Pāṇḍavas are up in arms against him. Another point in the behaviour of his master also strikes Vinayandhara as being improper viz. that he should feel no anxiety at the overthrow of the celebrated warrior Bhīṣma, who has been laid low by the Pāṇḍavas, but that he should be elated at the murder of the boy Abhimanyu, already much too exhausted by his victory over many mature fighters! The Chamberlain sees no hope for his master except that of Providence, and proceeds to inform Duryodhana that Bhānumatī is in the Bālodyāna.

## 7 CRITICAL APPRECIATION OF PRELUDE TO ACT ii

In a drama there are always certain subordinate parts of the plot, which are important enough for the audience to know, but which at the same time are not so important as to be regularly enacted on the stage. Then again there are certain incidents, the knowledge of which is necessary for the audience in order to pick up the thread of the narrative, but which are impossible to be actually represented on the stage, either on account of the inherent difficulty involved in such representation, or on account of the prohibition of their representation laid down in works on dramaturgy.



It is just these subordinate parts and these incidents that form the proper province of a Viṣkambhaka or Prelude, and a Praveśaka or Interlude. Used at the beginning of an act, the purpose of a Prelude or an Interlude is thus to connect the preceding with the subsequent Act by informing the audience of what has happened in the interval, either by direct statement, or, better, by indirect suggestions. This is done by means of a monologue, or of a conversation between two or more characters. The very nature of a Prelude or an Interlude precludes the possibility of characters of the first class taking part therein and they are therefore run by middle or low characters. Their purpose necessarily gives them an air of artificiality, for therein we get more narration than action, and the cleverer the dramatic artist is, the more natural and easy his Viṣkambhakas and Praveśakas turn out. Besides this Viṣkambhaka Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa has used a Praveśaka at the beginning of the next Act and in both these he shows himself to be a very successful artist.

This Viṣkambhaka, though so short, is so full of suggestions, which moreover are conveyed to the audience in a perfectly natural way. War, we learn, has already commenced and Bhīṣma, the first Commander-in-Chief of Duryodhana has been over-thrown. Abhimanyu, Arjuna's valiant son, has just been slain and the Kaurava king is in exultation. But the chief importance of this Viṣkambhaka lies in the glimpses it affords us into the character of Duryodhana, who is to figure prominently in the main scene to follow. By means of a few artistic touches Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa has here skilfully painted the character of Duryodhana, who has been shown to be at once thoughtless, mean, voluptuous and degraded. When the Chamberlain makes a reference to Duryodhana's wonderful power, he is really somewhat sarcastic in his remark and wants to bring out the thoughtlessness of his master in issuing to an old



decrepit servant a command which makes him run about in spite of himself. That he should rejoice at the slaughter of Abhimanyu and proceed to congratulate the great warriors who conjointly killed the boy, who was fighting single-handed and was exhausted, is a sufficient testimony to his meanness and moral degradation. His profound unconcernedness at the overthrow of the greatest warrior on his side shows how little he has realised the responsibilities of his position and his attraction for the pleasures of his wife's company, in the face of the Pāṇḍavas who were up in arms against him, reveals at once his voluptuousness and his recklessness.

It is worthy of note that all these traits of Duryodhana's character have been brought to our notice so naturally that we hardly think the author is making any conscious efforts to delineate his character. For he takes advantage of the natural tendency of servants, especially old ones, to criticise the doings of their masters behind their back and nothing therefore strikes us as unnatural when the Chamberlain gives us a piece of his mind regarding his master Duryodhana. This picture of Duryodhana serves also a dramatic purpose viz. it prepares us for witnessing him as he is painted in the second Act proper.

Another important character to which our attention is drawn in this Prelude is Bhānumatī. The wife of a great, proud, reckless and voluptuous monarch, who is passionately fond of her, Bhānumatī still remains a dutiful daughter-in-law and observes the usual custom of paying her respects to her mother-in-law every morning, though, as we shall presently see, her mind is extremely uneasy. She has already grown apprehensive regarding her husband's safety and in her own way attempts to ensure him victory of arms in the field by commencing religious observances. She presents an interesting contrast to her



reckless husband, who cannot realise the seriousness of the situation, a contrast which is carefully maintained throughout the second Act.

## 8 SUMMARY OF ACT ii

Queen Bhānumatī has dreamt an ominous dream, which has greatly alarmed her loving heart. Consequently she leaves her bed-chamber early in the morning, even without taking formal leave of her husband, as was her wont, and after paying her customary respects to her mother-in-law, retires to a lonely place in the Bālodyāna in company with her friend Suvadanā and her maid Taralikā and with the discovery of these three women in the Bālodyāna, the second Act proper commences.

Pressed by her friend and her maid to relate to them the account of her dream, Bhānumatī, with the nervousness so natural to her loving nature, tells them that in her dream she saw a nakula or an ichneumon killing a hundred serpents in her presence and that the same nakula afterwards proudly removed her breast garment. This is surely ominous as it indicates the slaughter of the hundred Kauravas and the inflicting of widowhood on Bhānumatī at the hands of Bhīmasena. Suvadanā and Taralikā become naturally alarmed even like Bhānumatī and they all determine to avert the evil effects of the dream by pious deeds such as salutation to gods and gifts to Brāhmanas. The sun has by this time risen high and Bhānumatī offers him worship with great devotion and begs of him that her evil dream may through his favour turn out to be auspicious to her husband and his brothers. As she further proceeds to perform the worship of other deities as well, her pious activity is rudely disturbed by her husband Duryodhana, who recklessly scatters on the ground the flowers meant for being offered to the gods.



Duryodhana with his sensual disposition concludes that his beloved is lovingly angry with him, as she did not formally take his leave while departing from his chamber early in the morning. He therefore wants to see and appease her before going to the field of battle to congratulate the valiant slayers of Abhimanyu. Accordingly he follows her into the Bālodyāna, overhears her conversation with Svadanā and Taralikā and becomes suspicious about her virtue owing to the ambiguity of the word *nakula* in her speech, but fortunately his suspicions are dispelled in time. He then introduces himself only to stop his beloved's pious observances by his lewd behaviour and flouts away her apprehensions created by the dream as being ridiculous, unfounded and useless.

At this time a violent hurricane makes it impossible for the party to stay in the garden and they all repair to the security of the palace on the wooden mountain, where Duryodhana feels himself at liberty to commence dalliance with his wife afresh. But he is most unceremoniously disturbed by old Vinayandhara, who comes in confusion to inform him that the flag of his chariot has been broken by the terrible wind. The door-keeper then enters to announce the arrival of Duryodhana's sister Duśśalā and her mother-in-law, who are terrified at the solemn declaration of Arjuna that he would kill Sindhurāja, in revenge for his son's dastardly murder, before the sun had set on that day. Duryodhana quiets their fears by pointing out to them how futile the vows of the Pāṇḍavas are and at once goes away to defend his sister's husband against the attack of Arjuna.

## 9 CRITICAL APPRECIATION OF ACT ii

To the human mind generally the sentiment of love appeals more than any other. The second Act, which depicts this sentiment, is therefore very delightful. The contrast



between Duryodhana and his wife, which is already suggested in the Viṣkambhaka to this Act is here consistently maintained up to the end. The low despicable character of the Kuru king is thoroughly exposed. Right up from the beginning of this Act the poet has availed himself of every opportunity to lower Duryodhana in our estimation. The reckless way in which he stops the pious observance of his wife fully reveals his sensuality. His deliberate blindness to evil omens that unmistakably suggest his fall and his absolute refusal to form even a proper estimate of the strength of the Pāṇḍavas clearly indicate the infatuation of a doomed man which has completely overpowered him.

But the care with which the poet paints the character of Duryodhana, interesting in its own way no doubt, is as nothing when compared with the attention he bestows on Bhānumatī. Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa has lavished all his skill on her. She is in fact his favourite. An ideal wife, she has the misfortune of being wedded to a man who is unworthy of her. She represents virtue married to vice. The nervousness of her heart at the alarming dream she has dreamt is well brought out in the hesitating way in which she relates the account of her vision. Her devotion to her lord and her anxiety for his safety are visible at every step. A typical Hindu wife, she tries her best to persuade her husband to allow her to proceed in her pious observance; but she fails in her attempt and has to submit to the inevitable. Up to the very last she acts as the guardian angel of Duryodhana, but he heeds not her voice.

The poet has thus made Bhānumatī an exceedingly lovable woman. We now begin to wonder how such a perfect creature can have been guilty of the base, almost unwomanly, attack that she is represented as making on Draupadī in the first Act. We almost wish she had not ridiculed Draupadī in that way. That appears to be the only blot on her other-



wise faultless character. What is the explanation of this? Would the character of Bhānumatī be improved if we could drop that particular episode from the first Act? How could such a paragon of virtue stoop so low as to give such an unkind cut to a member of her own sex? Is there not inconsistency between the Bhānumatī as revealed in Act i and the Bhānumatī as represented here? In order to answer questions of this kind satisfactorily we must remember that Bhānumatī was after all a human creature. It appears to us that Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa, far from being inconsistent, only reveals his intimate knowledge of the world and human nature by representing Bhānumatī as passing that undignified remark concerning Draupadī. Thereby he wants to show to us that even virtue cannot remain immaculate when it is in constant association with vice. Day after day Bhānumatī must have heard Duryodhana, Duśśāsana and others ridiculing Draupadī and saying all sorts of things about her. And it was no wonder if she became tainted a little. Indeed, Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa himself appears to offer an explanation of this apparent inconsistency in the speech of Sahadeva<sup>(22)</sup>, who informs Bhīmasena that Bhānumatī after all is Duryodhana's wife and such meanness is therefore not unexpected from her.

There are one or two points in Bhānumatī's account of her dream that call for adverse criticism. She speaks of the nakula or ichneumon that she saw in her dream as possessed of a form that surpassed a celestial form in beauty. Now can this description be considered to be appropriate as

(22) Read:—

सहदेवः—आर्य, उचितमेवेतत्तस्याः । दुर्योधनकलत्रं हि सा । पश्य ।

स्त्रीणां हि साहचर्याद्भवन्ति चेतांसि भर्तृसदृशानि ।

मधुराणि हि मूर्च्छयते विषादिपिसमाश्रिता बह्वी ॥ २० ॥

—वेणीसंहार i.



applied to an ichneumon? Do we ever make a distinction between a good-looking ichneumon and an ugly one? Ideas like these are possible in the case of noble animals like horses, elephants and others. We may for instance speak of a horse as possessed of excellent or even celestial beauty. But to speak of an ichneumon as surpassing celestial beauty sounds a trifle absurd. Then again how can an ichneumon remove the garment from Bhānumatī's bosom by extending his hand? Bhānumatī is not even represented as sitting. She entered a bower of creepers. The ichneumon followed her and removed her breast-garment by stretching out his hand. How then could this happen?

In this connection it appears to us that in making Bhānumatī relate the account of her dream Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa was so much taken by the suggested sense of her words, the sense which he intended Duryodhana to understand, that he actually neglected to see that the words of Bhānumatī, in the sense in which she intended them, were reasonable. This must therefore be put down as a serious defect in the episode of the dream which otherwise is very ingenious. There is however a way of 'defending Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa. Visions seen in dreams must not be judged by standards applicable to incidents of ordinary life. For in dreams all kinds of occurrences, possible and impossible, are observed. Svapaṇ janah kim na khalu prekṣate? Bādarāyaṇa also speaks of the wonderful appearances presented in dreams. (Vide Brahmasūtra iii. 2. 3 and Rāmaṇuja's Śrībhāṣya thereon) Therefore the dream of Bhānumatī, though apparently unreasonable, must not be considered to be really so. It must be added however that such defence appears to us to be extremely weak.

The second Act is delightful no doubt. But how far does it advance the central action of the drama? What is the purpose of this Act as part of the play Venīsaṃhāra?



If these questions are pressed home, Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa has no answer. In fact, as we enjoy the various episodes in this Act, the account of Bhānumati's dream, Duryodhana's suspicions about her virtue, the love scene between the husband and the wife, we altogether forget that we are reading a drama called Venīsaṁhāra. Only towards the close of the Act, when Duśśalā and her mother-in-law enter with the news of Arjuna's vow, we become aware of events happening outside the Bāloḍyāna. Thus as far as the central action of the drama is concerned, the only advance made by this Act is the knowledge of Arjuna's vow that is conveyed to the audience.

This then represents the fundamental defect in Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's dramatic genius. Though master of the art of portraying brilliant character sketches, the poet lacked the skill of weaving his Acts indissolubly with the central action. This Act, for instance, appears to have been constructed more for the purpose of depicting Śṛṅgāra and presenting the characters of Duryodhana and Bhānumati than for advancing the action of the play. Even with reference to this love scene and the manner in which it is described, a critic may raise an objection on the ground of the advanced age of the parties concerned. For we must remember that Duryodhana was fairly old by this time.

## 10 SUMMARY OF INTERLUDE TO ACT iii

On the field of battle a demoness in hideous dress is glutting over the war which affords her ample opportunities of feasting upon human flesh and blood. She is gratified to think that the war has enabled her to replenish her larder with hundreds of pitchers of human blood, flesh and marrow. In this scene of delight she is reminded of her husband Rudhirapriya and wonders where he could have gone. She then calls out to him.



Rudhirapriya now makes his appearance. He is fatigued and is feeling thirsty. Vasāgandhā is struck to find her husband suffering from thirst when there is a regular sea of blood and fat on the battle-field on account of the innumerable men, elephants and horses that are slain. Rudhirapriya informs her that he has been to see their mistress Queen Hidimbā, who is burning with grief for the death of her son Ghatotkaca. Only somehow she is being consoled by Queen Subhadra, herself in similar sorrow owing to the slaughter of Abhimanyu, and by Draupadi. Vasāgandhā then proceeds to inform her husband of the great store that she has been able to collect and recounts the names of some of the famous warriors whose blood and fat have contributed to that store.

Rudhirapriya on his part informs his wife of a welcome command he has received from Queen Hidimbā. Master Bhīmasena has vowed to drink the blood of Duśśāsana. Rudhirapriya must therefore wander on the battle-field in the wake of Bhīmasena and drink Duśśāsana's blood by entering Bhīmasena's body at the proper time. Vasāgandhā is only too glad to learn of this command.

A great tumult is at this time heard. The demon observes that Droṇa is being dragged by the hair and killed with a sword by Dhṛṣṭadyumna. Aśvatthāman is then sighted and the demon couple quickly quits the stage lest he may kill them too in anger against the son of Drupada.

## 11 CRITICAL APPRECIATION OF INTERLUDE TO ACT iii

From the dramatic point of view this Interlude is most successful. In a perfectly natural way it suggests so many things that have happened in the interval between the close



of the second Act and the beginning of the third. Arjuna has fulfilled his vow of killing Jayadratha and he did excellent battle work on that day. Ghaṭotkaca, Drupada and Virāṭa (Lord of the Matsyas) on the Pāṇḍava side and Bhagadatta, Bhūriśravas, Somadatta and Bālhika on the Kaurava side have been killed. We also know Droṇa has just been slain by Dhṛṣṭadyumna and the entrance of Aśvatthāman is cleverly suggested. It will thus be seen that this Interlude advances the action of the play in a very great measure.

But one may ask: What was the necessity of representing this loathsome scene between the demon and the demoness and the disgusting Bibhatsarasa with which it is replete? Would it not have been possible for the poet to suggest all these incidents in some other way, say, by means of a conversation between two servants or two soldiers? Is it not an evidence of bad taste on the part of the author to present us with a scene of this kind after the delightful love-scene of Act ii?

It appears to us there are three purposes, two moral and the third dramatic, which Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa wants to achieve by means of this Praveśaka. As a delineator of human society he wants us to realise that the world is not after all merely 'delightful'. It possesses a much more varied character than we seem to imagine. Engrossed in the enjoyment of sensual pleasures we are too often apt to forget this. Writers on philosophical subjects sometimes try to dissuade us from worldly pleasures by depicting the human body in all sorts of loathsome ways. By representing how our most cherished bodies are after our death eagerly feasted upon by demons and goblins, the poet seems to create in us dislike for mere animal pleasures. Bhartṛhari tried to depict the true nature of worldly existence by telling us in one



stanza what happens in different places in human society.<sup>(a)</sup> By depicting this loathsome scene just after the delightful scene between Duryodhana and Bhānumatī, Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa probably wants to convey to us the same lesson.

It will be noticed that underlying the Bibhatsarasa which is so prominent in this Praveśaka, there is a current of the sentiment of love. It is not difficult to detect in the speeches and actions of the demoness her intense love for her husband. By making the hideous demon couple the ālambana-vibhāva<sup>(b)</sup> or substratum of love, the poet accomplishes the second moral purpose of this Interlude viz. to demonstrate the essential unity of love. Educated and cultured people living in cities, surrounded by all the conveniences and comforts that modern civilization can provide, sometimes seem to think that fine dresses and dainty food, motor cars and ball rooms and things of this kind generally, are necessary for the development and enjoyment of love. Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa perhaps wants to tell us by means of this Praveśaka that love can be developed and enjoyed as much in the filthy surroundings of the ghastly war as in the romantic environments of the Bāloadyana!

(a) Bhartṛhari's stanza runs as follows :

कचिद्वीणावाद्यं कचिदपि च हा हेति रुदितं  
कचिद्विद्वद्गोष्ठी कचिदपि सुरामत्तकलहः ।  
कचिद्रामा रम्या कचिदपि गलत्कुट्टवपुषो  
न जाने संसारः किममृतमयः किं विषमयः ॥

—वैराग्यशतक

(b) A sentiment, according to Sanskrit poetics, is developed on account of Vibhāva, Anubhāva etc., as declared in 'विभावनामुभावेन व्यक्तः सञ्चारिणा तथा । रसतामेति रत्यादिः तस्मात्' साहित्यदर्पण iii. 1. विभावs are of two kinds, आलम्बनविभावs. and उद्दीपनविभावs. आलम्बनविभावs are women etc. who excite love. उद्दीपनविभावs are चन्द्रोदय, वसन्त etc. which heighten love.



The delight which the prince derives from the company of his accomplished queen is exactly the same as the peasant receives from association with his rustic wife.

A philosophically-inclined mind will perhaps see in this *Praveśaka*, with its under-current of love, quite a different moral purpose. If love can be found in such disgusting surroundings and among such hideous people, it certainly cannot be the magnificent and sacred emotion that poetry depicts it to be. Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa is probably ridiculing that sentiment in this *Praveśaka* and asking us to flee away from it and seek solace somewhere else. Such will be the lesson that a philosopher may draw from this Interlude.

But the dramatic purpose of this *Praveśaka* is far more important than the moral ones and it is this which testifies to Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's genius. Bhīmasena had vowed to drink the blood from Duśśāsana's chest. As a Kṣatriya he must literally carry out his vow. But how was an Āryan to drink the blood of his enemy? A demon could drink human blood, not a prince of a renowned royal family. Such a fiendish act would ill become the hero of a drama. It was true in the *Mahābhārata* Bhīmasena performed this ghastly deed. But surely a dramatist could lessen the loathsome character of the act by giving it a different turn. This is what Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa has done by introducing this scene between the demon and the demoness. Queen Hidimbā has so ordered that Rudhirapriya is to enter Bhīmasena's body and drink Duśśāsana's blood, so that it is not a Kṣatriya, but a demon that will drink human blood. Of course Bhīmasena is not aware of this arrangement. When he performs the deed, he boasts of having himself drunk the blood of Duśśāsana ( vide iv. 1 below ). But we know that it is not Bhīmasena, but somebody else, who has drunk human blood. It will thus be seen that from the point of view of dramatic effect the importance of this



Praveśaka lies in this that it absolves the hero of the drama, in the eyes of the reader and the spectator, from the sin of having drunk the blood of a human being. In order therefore to be able to do this, the poet brings in a conversation between the demon and the demoness. No other kind of Praveśaka would have served his purpose.

## 12 SUMMARY OF ACT iii

Ásvatthāman, the valiant son of Duryodhana's second C-in-C Drona, is struck at the great uproar that is proceeding from the battlefield. Thinking that his father has perhaps begun battle-work in earnest, he proceeds to the field to witness the display of his father's valour. An evil omen agitates his mind a little and he is surprised to see even great warriors like Karna running away. Just then Áśvasena, the charioteer of Drona, arrives to inform the young warrior of his father's tragic end. Ásvatthāman further learns that a false news of his own death was conveyed to his father, who, thereupon, being overcome with grief laid down his weapon and was in such defenceless position decapitated by Dhr̥ṣṭadyumna. This enhances both the grief and wrath of Ásvatthāman, who in the meanwhile is joined by his maternal uncle Kṛpa. Kṛpa succeeds in assuaging to a certain extent the grief of his nephew. Ásvatthāman becomes impatient to avenge the murder of his father and orders his chariot to be made ready. Kṛpa now suggests to the young man that he should seek succession to the position of the C-in-C and tells him that Duryodhana is probably ready to install him in that position. Both thereupon proceed to see the king.

Duryodhana and Karna now make their appearance. The former wonders why Drona, on hearing the death of his son, laid down his arms, instead of vigorously proceeding with the work of avenging it. Karna cunningly informs



him that Droṇa really wanted to crown his son Emperor of the whole earth after the great war had destroyed all the Kṣatriyas and therefore thought it was no use wielding arms when his son had been killed and thus abandoned his weapon. At this stage Kṛpa and Aśvatthāman approach them. Kṛpa then suggests to Duryodhana the advisability of installing Aśvatthāman Commander of his armies, but the latter tells him that that position has already been promised to Karna. In the conversation that follows Karna makes some malicious remark against Aśvatthāman with the result that an altercation between the two takes place and they become ready to strike at each other. Duryodhana and Kṛpa pacify them. Seeing that he cannot humble the pride of Karna, who has slandered his father, Aśvatthāman vows that he will forego his weapon till Karna is killed.

At this time a fearful announcement is made from behind the curtain. Bhīmasena has caught Duśśāsana in his clutches and challenges all the Kaurava warriors to protect him if they can. Duryodhana and Karna quickly leave the stage in order to render help to Duśśāsana. Aśvatthāman observes that Arjuna has engaged both Duryodhana and Karna and Bhīmasena is about to fulfil his dreadful vow. The scene is too much for him and he becomes ready to grasp his weapon. But an aerial voice prevents him from proving false to his vow. The gods seem to be on the side of the Pāṇḍavas. Aśvatthāman is helpless. He however sends Kṛpa to back Duryodhana up and then himself leaves for the camp.

### 13 CRITICAL APPRECIATION OF ACT iii

The third Act consists of five scenes. The first commences with the entrance of Aśvatthāman and ends with Sūta's speech after stanza 12 on p. 67. The second is a short one and is made up of Kṛpa's soliloquy on pp. 67-



68. The third begins with Kṛpa's speech after stanza 14 on p. 68 and also ends with his speech on p. 76, when both he and Aśvatthāman start for the place where Duryodhana is staying. The fourth scene consists of the dialogue between Duryodhana and Karna and extends from stanza 27 on p. 76 to stanza 28 on p. 78. The fifth and the last scene begins with Kṛpa's speech after stanza 28 on p. 78 and extends to the end of the Act.

The scenes that go to form the various Acts of the *Veṇiśamhāra* are so managed by Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa as to present no difficulty for their representation on the stage. Thus here we see that while Kṛpa goes through his soliloquy that forms the second scene, Aśvatthāman is in a swoon and the charioteer is engaged in restoring him to consciousness. The two characters, who are already on the stage before Kṛpa's entrance, are in this manner kept busy during Kṛpa's soliloquy. This is a clever device and reminds us of a similar one used by the poet in Act i for keeping Bhīmasena and Sahadeva engaged while Draupadī and Buddhimatikā hold a dialogue found on pp. 11 and 12.

But in this Act there is a difficulty of stage-management further on. What are Kṛpa and Aśvatthāman to do during the conversation between Duryodhana and Karna, that forms the fourth scene of this Act? The stage direction intended for them says merely 'parikrāmataḥ'. Are they simply to move to one side of the stage and stand there listlessly till the dialogue between the king and his friend is over? This would be a very awkward situation for these two characters to be in and would indicate faulty stage-management. Though Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa does not actually say so, it appears to us that he wants these two characters to quit the stage ostensibly with a view to go to Duryodhana's camp, but really in order to avoid the unenviable situation of having to stand blankly on the stage. No.



sooner do they leave the stage than up goes the curtain and Duryodhana and Karna are discovered. At the end of stanza 28 they enter again. Such is probably the arrangement intended by the poet.

The third Act once again reveals Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's skill in his special province viz. vivid delineation of character. Aśvatthāman, Duryodhana and Karna are the three main characters painted here. We have already seen some important traits of Duryodhana's character in Act ii. In this Act he is depicted to us as a typical king of ancient India. Karna plays the part of a courtier to Duryodhana. Guileless, straightforward and innocent by nature, but much too inclined to rely on the words of his favourite—such is King Duryodhana, as Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa here makes him out to be. His diagnosis<sup>(c)</sup> as to why the Brāhmaṇa warrior Droṇa laid down his arms in grief instead of vigorously going ahead with the work avenging the reported death of his beloved son is correct. But the malicious Karna puts quite a different construction on the old warrior's action and Duryodhana's weakness of mind is seen in the ease with which he believes the words of his favourite friend.

But the main topic that interests Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa in this Act is the contrast between the characters of Aśvatthāman and Karna. He has successfully depicted this from the very beginning of the Act up to its end. Out of the two warriors Aśvatthāman is evidently the poet's favourite. With a view to exalt him Karna has been deliberately lowered. The meanness with which Karna attributes motives to Droṇa's actions, makes very disparaging remarks about him, perverts facts and in general shows throughout a very malicious

(c) Read 'सूक्तमिदमभ्युक्तेः प्रकृतिदुस्त्यजेति । यतः शोकान्धमनसा तेन विमुच्य  
सूत्रधर्मकाकश्यं द्विजातिधर्ममुल्लभो मार्दवपरिग्रहः कृतः ।' Text pp. 76-77



attitude towards the Brāhmaṇa warrior, gives us a rude shock. Karna in the Mahābhārata is certainly not so mean. It is true he does not possess any very great admiration and veneration for Droṇa. But he is a thorough sportsman all the same. During the days that Droṇa held supreme command, Karna fought under him ungrudgingly. Not only this but when Duryodhana accused Droṇa of partiality towards Arjuna in allowing him to break through his lines which he had to do in order to kill Jayadratha, Karna defended Droṇa by remarking that the latter did his best, but that the death of Jayadratha was due to fate.<sup>(d)</sup> On the other hand Aśvatthāman in the Mahābhārata is not so noble, as he is depicted in this drama. Why then should Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa exalt the one and lower the other? The reason appears to be that as a Brāhmaṇa the poet naturally felt well disposed towards the Brāhmaṇa warrior and wanted to make him out as a paragon of virtue, in whom love for his father,

- (d) For this incident read chapter 152, Droṇaparvan, from which the following stanzas may be quoted :

अमर्यीच तदा कर्ण पुत्रो दुर्योधनस्तव ।  
 पश्य कृष्णसहस्रेण पाण्डवेन किरीटिना ॥ २ ॥  
 आचार्यानिहितं बृहं मित्वा देवैः सुदुर्मिदम् ।  
 तव व्याचक्षुमानस्य द्रोणस्य च महात्मनः ॥ ३ ॥  
 मिषतां योषमुख्यानां सैन्धवो विनिपातितः ।.....  
 अनिच्छतः कथं वीर द्रोणस्य युधि पाण्डवः ।  
 भिन्यात् सुदुर्मिदं बृहं यतमानस्य शुष्मिणः ॥ ९ ॥  
 दयितः फाल्गुनो नित्यमाचार्यस्य महात्मनः ।  
 ततोऽस्य दत्तवान् द्वारमयुद्धेनैव शत्रुहन् ॥ १० ॥  
 अमर्यं सिन्धुराजाय दत्त्वा द्रोणः परंतपः ।  
 प्रादात् किरीटिने द्वारं पश्य निर्गुणतां नयि ॥ ११ ॥.....  
 आचार्यं मा विगर्हस्व शक्त्यासौ युद्धचते द्विजः ।  
 यथाबलं यथोत्साहं त्यक्त्वा जीवितमात्मनः ॥ १५ ॥  
 यथेनं समातिक्रम्य प्रविष्टः श्वेतवाहनः ।  
 नात्र सूक्ष्मोऽपि दोषः स्यादाचार्यस्य कथंचन ॥ १६ ॥.....  
 सैन्धवो निहतो युद्धे दैवमत्र परं स्मृतम् । ... २४

कर्ण उवाच ।



bravery, high sense of duty, nobility and magnanimity were all combined. The Kṣatriya warrior Karna did not deserve much sympathy. It did not matter if he was painted mean, malicious and despicable. It would thus appear that some kind of caste-predilection was responsible for such pictures of Aśvatthāman and Karna.

It is sometimes supposed that the quarrel between Aśvatthāman and Karna arose out of the question of succession to the command of the armies after the death of Droṇa. But this supposition is incorrect. Careful perusal of the relevant passages from this Act will show that the quarrel has nothing to do with the question of succession to the supreme command of the armies. When the first shock of grief for the death of his father is over and Aśvatthāman becomes ready to go to the battle-field to have his revenge, Kṛpa suggests to him that he should first get himself installed Commander of the armies. In a spirit of true sportsmanship, Aśvatthāman remarks that this is not of much consequence. But Kṛpa tells him that Duryodhana is probably eager to give him that post and is perhaps waiting for his arrival to install him therein. If this is the case, Aśvatthāman will like to go and offer to accept the command himself instead of waiting to be formally requested by Duryodhana to do so. But in all this it is clear that Aśvatthāman nowhere shows himself eager to have the post. When again in the interview with the king, Aśvatthāman learns that Duryodhana has already promised the post to Karna, he does not utter a single word of dissatisfaction or protest, but once more declares his intention of doing his best to kill the king's enemies. It will thus be seen that the quarrel has nothing to do with succession to the command of the armies.

The quarrel between Aśvatthāman and Karna arises in the following manner. It was Kṛpa who actually suggests



to Duryodhana that Ásvatthāman should be installed in the position which his father held. Duryodhana thereupon informs him that that office has already been promised to Karna. Kṛpa then remarks that it is not proper to supersede Ásvatthāman in favour of Karna, especially when Ásvatthāman is at this time immersed in grief. At this stage Ásvatthāman intervenes and puts a stop to this conversation between the king and Kṛpa regarding succession to the command of the armies by declaring in bombastic language that he will kill the enemies of Duryodhana that very day and finish all talk of war. Karna thereupon reminds him that such things are easier said than done. Besides there are other warriors also in the Kaurava army, who are capable of achieving what Ásvatthāman boasts he will do. Ásvatthāman appreciates the truth of Karna's remarks and in almost apologetic terms explains that his words arose from the vehemence of his grief and that he had no intention to belittle the prowess of any warrior on the Kaurava side. Here the matter should really have ended. But Karna makes a wicked and malicious remark to the effect that he who is immersed in grief should shed tears and that he who is enraged should descend on the field of battle, weapon in hand, but should not indulge in such ravings.<sup>(c)</sup> It is this remark of Karna that inflames Ásvatthāman and the quarrel commences. It will thus be seen that it is Karna who is responsible for the quarrel and the moral guilt of its consequences lies wholly on his head.

(c) Read:—

अश्वत्थामा—अङ्गिराज, एवमिदम् । बहवः कौरवबलेन शक्ताः । किं तु इः क्षोपहतः

शोकविग्वशाद् ब्रवीमि, न पुनर्वीरजनाधिक्षेपण ।

कर्णः—मूढ, दुःखितस्याश्रुपातः कुपितस्यायुधद्वितीयस्य संशामावतरणमुचितं नैव-

विधाः प्रलापाः ।

—Act iii, p. 82

In the Mahābhārata succession to the supreme command of the armies after the death of Drona was a very smooth affair. When Drona was killed, Kaurava forces began to run away. Duryodhana stopped them and carried on the fight till the evening. Then he held a council of war, wherein Aśvatthāman himself proposed that Karna should be installed as the Commander of the armies.<sup>(f)</sup> Duryodhana consequently offered the position to Karna, who accepted it with alacrity.

The remark we made at the end of Act ii is equally applicable to Act iii also. Though presenting brilliant character sketches and arresting situations the Act does not in any way mark the progress of the main action of the plot. Even as in the case of the second Act, so here as well the only progress made is towards the end. That progress is represented by the fearful announcement of Bhīmasena that Duśśāsana has fallen within his clutches and his challenge to all Kaurava warriors to protect him if they can. As observed before Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa lacked the art of dramatic construction. Perhaps the nature of the plot he selects rather than an inherent defect in his genius is responsible for so many brilliant but detached scenes, loosely strung together, that really constitute his drama.

#### 14 SUMMARY OF ACT iv

Towards the close of the last Act we have seen how on learning that Duśśāsana has fallen within the clutches of

(f) Vide chapter 10, Karna-parvan, from which read:—

आचार्यमुनो मेधावी वाक्यज्ञो वाक्यमाददे ।.....१२

ते वयं प्रवरं नृणां सर्वगुणगणैर्भुतम् ॥ १५ ॥

कर्णमेवाभिषेक्ष्यामः सेनापत्येन भारत ।

कर्णं सेनापतिं कृत्वा प्रमथिष्यामहे रिपुम् ॥ १६

एष हतिबलः शूरः कृतास्त्रो युद्धदुर्मदः ।

सैन्यस्य ह्याह्वयः शत्रुतो जेतुं नो रिपुम् ॥ १७ ॥



Bhīmasena, Karna and Duryodhana run to his help. Arjuna engages them both, while his elder brother accomplishes his dreadful vow. In the fight Duryodhana receives a number of wounds, which bring on a swoon. His charioteer therefore thinks it wise to hasten away his master's chariot from the field of battle and the fourth Act opens with the entrance of this charioteer, who is conveying away his master, lying unconscious in the chariot.

The charioteer takes the chariot under the shade of a certain Nyagrodha tree near a lake, where he hopes his master will regain his consciousness, being fanned by the cool fragrant breeze. Duryodhana as yet does not know that Bhīmasena has already butchered his brother. On recovering he becomes eager to run to his brother's help. But when the truth is related to him, he is overcome by grief, and even despondency, under the influence of which he wishes he were dead.

At this time Sundaraka, a soldier belonging to Karna's army, enters. He has been sent by Karna with a message to Duryodhana. After some efforts he succeeds in finding the whereabouts of his Majesty and gives to him a detailed report of the fight which ensued after the slaughter of Duśśāsana and in which Karna's son Vṛṣasena lost his life. This is a fresh grief to Duryodhana, which, added to the melancholy message of Karna, increases his despondency. He, however, determines to kill his enemies before committing suicide and wants therefore to go to the field of battle. At this time the arrival of his parents, Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Gāndhārī is announced and though unwilling to see them in this condition, he decides to go and pay them his respects.



## 15 CRITICAL APPRECIATION OF ACT IV

The fourth Act of the Veṅṣamhāra is the weakest of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's work. Criticism on it could be passed in one sentence viz. that it represents a long and tedious and at the same time ill-executed Viṣkambhaka. Even as in a Viṣkambhaka there is here no action. There is no movement except that of Duryodhana's charioteer at the beginning and of Sundaraka during his preliminary speech. From the point of view of dramatic effect these cannot be successful on the stage. During the rest of the Act no movement is seen. As for information conveyed, the only piece of fresh news we learn is the death of Vṛṣasena and the determination of Karna to seek and fight a combat with Arjuna to a finish and to kill him or be killed. So even as a Viṣkambhaka the Act can hardly be said to be successful.

What then is the purpose of this Act? It appears to us that just as the poet made use the second Act in order to depict the sentiment of love, so he utilises this in order to delineate the sentiment of pathos. Right up from the beginning upto the very end the Act is full of pathos. Pathos in fact is the proper stronghold of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa and the prevailing sentiment in this drama. In some passages of this Act and in some of the next two the pathos of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa can successfully compete with the well-known pathos of Bhavabhūti. The lamentations of the charioteer of Duryodhana over his master's swoon in the beginning, almost all the speeches of Sundaraka with their descriptions of the mental condition of Karna, the wailings of Duryodhana over the deaths of Duśśāsana and Vṛṣasena—all these are highly pathetic. In spite of the low opinion we have formed of Duryodhana's character, we sympathise with him and we are almost moved to tears in his company. And when stricken with unutterable sorrow



he utters the last stanza of this Act, we forget his evil doings and become a sharer of his griefs.

As already observed Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa was adept in the art of presenting character-sketches. The fidelity and love of Duryodhana's charioteer are well brought out. The chivalry of Arjuna is clearly suggested. The intense love of Duryodhana for his brother and his deep friendship for Karna are successfully depicted. These in fact formed the only relieving features of Duryodhana's otherwise low character.

The Act also presents to us some very beautiful examples of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's prose. The opening speech of Sundaraka and his descriptions of Arjuna's fight and Karna's mental condition may well take a very high rank as specimens of Sanskrit prose literature.

## 16 SUMMARY OF ACT V

This Act opens, as already suggested towards the close of the last Act, with the entrance of Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Gāndhārī in a chariot driven by Sañjaya. They go to the field of battle ostensibly with a desire to offer consolation to Duryodhana, but really with the object of inducing him to desist from fight and sue for peace with Yudhiṣṭhira. Duryodhana easily refutes the arguments they adduce for making peace and prepares to go to the battle-field to fight with Bhīmasena. At this time a great uproar is heard behind the curtain and the news of Karna's death is brought. This throws all of them in grief and Duryodhana now determines to kill Arjuna first in revenge for the slaughter of his friend. Another uproar behind the curtain introduces Bhīmasena and Arjuna on the stage. They are in search of Duryodhana with a view to pay him a friendly visit, but on learning that Duryodhana is sitting with his parents, Arjuna thinks of returning. Bhīmasena insists on paying



their respects to the elders as a matter of duty. High words pass between Bhīmasena on the one hand and Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Duryodhana on the other. A fight between Bhīmasena and Duryodhana looks likely, but Arjuna somehow prevents it. At this time a voice from behind the curtain announces the command of Yudhiṣṭhira to Bhīmasena and Arjuna to withdraw their forces and stop the fight, as evening has arrived. The two Pāṇḍava brothers consequently leave the stage.

Once more from behind the curtain Aśvatthāman's challenge to Arjuna is heard; for Karna being now killed, Aśvatthāman is free to take up his weapon. Dhṛtarāṣṭra is glad at his arrival and asks Duryodhana to receive him with due courtesy. But the proud monarch is in no mood to extend courtesy towards a man, who wished and waited for Karna's death. Consequently he receives the Brāhmaṇa warrior with indifference and even makes a cutting reference to his vow of fighting on Karna's death. Dissatisfied with the reception he has met, Aśvatthāman departs. Dhṛtarāṣṭra fears that Duryodhana's coldness towards a warrior of Aśvatthāman's calibre at this time forebodes the end of the Bharata family. Yet he gathers up courage and sends word to Aśvatthāman not to mind Duryodhana's words, but to do his best to destroy the enemies on the score of his friendship with Duryodhana from their very childhood. Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Gāndhārī then go to Śalya's camp and also ask Duryodhana to accompany them.

## 17 CRITICAL APPRECIATION OF ACT V

After the Viṣkambhaka-like fourth Act, with its long descriptive speeches, this one affords welcome relief. It is full of movement from start to finish. There are here no less than six entrances, six exits and five speeches from behind the curtain. This Act can be divided into three



distinct scenes. The first comprises of the conversation between Duryodhana, his parents and Sañjaya and is exceedingly touching. The efforts of the old doting parents to dissuade Duryodhana from continuing the hopeless struggle have a peculiar pathetic interest. We pity the old couple, but we cannot sympathise with them. For, behind their parental affection is a kind of cowardice quite unworthy of epic Kṣatriyas. The pathos of the scene is heightened by the news of Karna's death which comes on the party like the bolt from the blue. This scene serves to bring out one more trait of Duryodhana's character viz. his excessively proud nature. Though disaster after disaster befalls him, his pride does not bend. His ready repudiation of the base proposal of Dhṛtarāṣṭra to devise some secret means of destroying the Pāṇḍavas demands our admiration. But the death of Karna, his greatest and most trusted friend, on whom all his hopes of conquering the enemies are centred, is a blow too heavy for even his proverbially proud spirit. Upto this time he has entertained hopes of victory, with Karna to support him. But now hope seems to forsake him. Conversation with Bhīmasena and Aśvatthāman is marked with the courage and defiance which desperation breeds. Altogether even in his fall Duryodhana shows himself to be great.

The second scene of this Act is that in which Bhīmasena and Arjuna take part. It is really difficult to understand what purpose Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa had in arranging this scene. Its only important feature is the wordy duel between Bhīmasena and Duryodhana. But we already have enough of such duel in the third Act. Then again no reason is assigned as to why Bhīmasena and Arjuna were seeking Duryodhana. Bhīmasena himself tells us they had no evil intention in trying to see him. What was their object then in going to that out-of-the-way spot of the battle-field in



search of Duryodhana? It is not possible to answer this question satisfactorily. The only possible answer is that not being able to see him on the field since the slaughter of Duśśāsana, they thought that Duryodhana was trying to avoid battle and wanted therefore to find him out and try to gather his intentions and inform him themselves, by way of triumph, of Karna's death.

Regarding this scene itself it appears to us that Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa grows a little uneasy over the fact that for the last three Acts his hero Bhīmasena has not made his appearance on the stage. The audience also becomes eager to see him especially after his killing Duśśāsana. Then again Arjuna was the principal hero of the Mahābhārata war. A play based on that epic, which does not bring him somewhere would be disappointing to the audience. So he must be made to come on the stage somehow. It is these considerations which appear to us to have weighed with the poet in arranging this scene.

The third and the last scene of this Act is the one in which Aśvatthāman figures. Now that Karna is dead, he is free to take up his weapon and enters on the stage with his usual rhodomontade of killing the Pāṇḍavas in no time. He even slightly refers to Karna's failure to act up to his word and boastfully professes to achieve everything that the king desired. Duryodhana, however, will have nothing of the man, who desired the death of his friend and curtly sends him away. But Dhṛtarāṣṭra implores him to do his best, not minding Duryodhana's offensive words.

Now what is the dramatic purpose of this scene? In the following Act there is no reference to Aśvatthāman's having done anything in accordance with Dhṛtarāṣṭra's entreaty or his own boastful words. What propriety is there then of bringing him on the stage in such martial enthusiasm, which is increased the more by his self-imposed



rest? Are we to suppose that he has grown so unsportsman-like as to neglect his duty by his side because Duryodhana does not receive him with honour? It would be difficult to make this supposition in view of the excellent spirit that *Āśvatthāman* displayed in the third Act. Under these circumstances the only justification for this scene would seem to lie in the author's desire further to illustrate Duryodhana's friendship for *Karna* by representing that he rejected the proffered services of even the great *Āśvatthāman*, because the latter desired for his friend's death and reviled him even after he had died and in his very presence.

It will thus be seen that though we have much movement in this Act, the scenes composing it are not dramatically relevant. This corroborates the impression already recorded viz. that *Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa* lacked constructive dramatic skill.

## 18 SUMMARY OF ACT vi

*Bhīmasena* has made a new vow that he would kill Duryodhana before the next day dawned and that he would commit suicide, if he failed to do so. On learning this Duryodhana disappears and his disappearance causes great anxiety to *Yudhiṣṭhira* and *Draupadī*, whose entrance along with a male and a female attendant marks the commencement of Act vi. *Yudhiṣṭhira* sends his attendant to *Sahadeva* with instructions to search all the possible places where Duryodhana may be found. As the attendant is departing on his mission, he meets *Pāṇcālaka*, with whom he re-enters the stage. *Pāṇcālaka* now gives the *Pāṇḍava* king and his queen a detailed account of how Duryodhana was traced to a lake and how *Bhīmasena* by violently agitating its water, forced him to come out. *Pāṇcālaka* proceeds to tell them that a battle between the two is proceeding and that he has been sent to *Yudhiṣṭhira* by the divine Lord *Kṛṣṇa* to say that



he may now safely look upon the world as void of all enemies and may start preparations for his coronation. Yudhiṣṭhira forthwith issues a command to his Kañcukin to begin festivities in expectation of his younger brother's victory.

A demon by name Cārvāka, a friend of Duryodhana, now enters in the guise of a sage. He pretends to have come from the battle-field and to be much fatigued and thirsty. In the course of his conversation with Yudhiṣṭhira he informs him that while the fight between Bhīmasena and Duryodhana was proceeding, Balarāma arrived on the scene and, impelled by affection for his favourite pupil Duryodhana, he made him a secret sign, by taking advantage of which the Kaurava was able to kill the Pāṇḍava. Arjuna then took up the mace from his dead brother's hand and is at present fighting with Duryodhana. The demon further reports how Balarāma, expecting the death of Arjuna, who was not skilful in a mace-fight, put on his chariot, with great efforts, his younger brother Kṛṣṇa, who was ever so partial to Arjuna, and departed for Dvārakā.

This news of the death of Bhīmasena causes great sorrow to the Pāṇḍava king and queen. Yudhiṣṭhira's grief knows no bounds. Draupadī becomes almost insane and presents a sight truly pathetic. Out of grief they both determine to commit suicide by burning themselves in fire, before hearing the unpleasant news of Arjuna's death. They are encouraged in this by the disguised demon, whose only object in thus misleading Yudhiṣṭhira and his queen is to make them commit suicide before Bhīmasena comes to them victorious. An uproar is heard from behind the curtain and Draupadī, fearing that the news of Arjuna's death may reach them any time, hastens Yudhiṣṭhira with a view to put into practice their resolve. Yudhiṣṭhira sends a loving message to Sahadeva, imploring him not to follow him in



death and also leaves a like message to Arjuna in case he be successful. After offering obsequial water to his father Pāṇḍu and to his recently killed brother Bhīmasena, Yudhiṣṭhira becomes ready to die along with Draupadī. At this time the confused Kañcukin brings the news that Duryodhana, with his body smeared with blood and with his terrible mace upraised, is coming and is seeking after the Pāñcālā princess. This of course means the death of Arjuna which magnifies the grief of Yudhiṣṭhira and Draupadī who are consequently overtaken by a swoon.

From behind the curtain comes now an announcement of Bhīmasena. Therein he asks people not to be scared away by his sight, but to inform him where Draupadī is. For he has killed Duryodhana and wants to fulfil his vow of tying Draupadī's hair with hands gory with the blood of the last of the Kauravas. As his body is smeared with blood all over, he cannot be easily distinguished with the result that he is taken to be Duryodhana covered with the blood of Bhīmasena and Arjuna. It is this mistake, which, as we have already seen, leads the Kañcukin to bring the news of Duryodhana's arrival in search of Pāñcālī.

Thus when Bhīmasena arrives on the stage, he finds that Yudhiṣṭhira is ready to fight with him, under the mistaken idea that he is Duryodhana, and that he actually catches him in his arms with violence. The mistake is quickly found out and Draupadī's hair are duly tied by Bhīmasena with hands stained with Duryodhana's blood, as he had once more promised her in Act i, 21. Even the Siddhas from the sky express their delight at the tying of Draupadī's mass of hair, which has been the cause of so much havoc in the world. Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna now enter and the Lord offers his congratulations to Yudhiṣṭhira. He further tells him that he has arrived in such haste because he came to know that Yudhiṣṭhira had been deluded by the demon



Cārvāka, who has, however, been subsequently captured by Sahadeva. There now remains nothing to complete the happiness of Yudhiṣṭhira and the drama closes with a blessing from the divine lips of Lord Kṛṣṇa in response to the request of Yudhiṣṭhira.

## 19 CRITICAL APPRECIATION OF ACT VI

The sixth Act consists of four distinct scenes. The first contains a description of the various means which Yudhiṣṭhira orders Sahadeva to adopt in order to find out the whereabouts of Duryodhana, and Pāñcālaka's account of how Duryodhana was traced to a lake and how Bhīmasena forced him to come out. The second scene commences with the entrance of the demon Cārvāka, who, by conveying to Yudhiṣṭhira and Draupadī the false news of Bhīmasena's death and Arjuna's mace-fight with Duryodhana, throws them in grief and encourages them to commit suicide by entering fire. The third consists of Yudhiṣṭhira's parting message to Sahadeva and Arjuna, and his preparation for death by offering a final libation of water to his ancestors and also to Bhīmasena. The fourth is marked by the entrance of the victorious Bhīmasena, the removal of Yudhiṣṭhira's delusion and the tying up of Draupadī's dishevelled hair, the Venīsamhāra, which forms the main theme of the drama.

The entrance of Yudhiṣṭhira and Draupadī at the beginning of this Act is abrupt. No indication of this is given in the previous Act. This is one more instance of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's lack of constructive skill. Then again instead of giving us a Viṣkambhaka, the poet makes the first stanza and the next long speech of Yudhiṣṭhira serve its purpose. A clever dramatist would have arranged a beautiful Viṣkambhaka in which the death of Śalya, the terrible vow of Bhīmasena and the disappearance of Duryo-



dhana could have been skilfully conveyed to the audience and would have concluded it with a cunning reference to the anxiety of Yudhiṣṭhira and Draupadī. This would have prepared us to see them enter on the stage and no abruptness would have been felt. Surely, this new vow of Bhīmasena was of sufficient importance to justify a Viṣkambhaka being assigned to it. Yudhiṣṭhira's passing reference to it does not bring home to the reader its dreadful importance.

Another point to be noted is that we are nowhere told the full nature of Bhīmasena's vow. It is apparently based upon Arjuna's vow to kill Jayadratha. But the fact that Bhīmasena had vowed to kill himself in case he failed to kill Duryodhana that very day is nowhere explicitly revealed to us. We have only to gather it from the fourth line of the first stanza. Merely to say that the vow was aparyuṣita is not sufficient. We have further to note that this vow of Bhīmasena is an invention of the poet. There is no saction for it in the Mahābhārata. Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's object in introducing it is to bring out the adventurous nature of Bhīmasena and to produce a startling dramatic effect. It spreads a gloom over the entire Paṇḍava camp in the very hour of victory and it is quite natural for Yudhiṣṭhira and Draupadī to be alarmed. It must however be remarked that a cleverer artist would have made a better use of this vow.

Out of these four scenes that constitute this Act the first is the weakest. Even like the fourth Act, this scene is of the nature of a Viṣkambhaka. Its purpose is to convey to the audience certain information and this information, as in the case of Act iv, is conveyed in the most inartistic manner. But the poet apparently had another purpose also in arranging this scene. He wanted to bring out the nobility of character of both Bhīmasena and Duryodhana.



Impelled by noble chivalry, which disdains to strike at a fallen dejected enemy, Bhīmasena offered Duryodhana the choice of fighting with any one of the Pāṇḍavas. It was an exceedingly critical moment. The fortune of the Pāṇḍavas was at stake. But Duryodhana also showed himself to be truly great and noble. The two heroes thus appear at their best in this scene. It must be noted here that the reasons, which Yudhiṣṭhira explains to Draupadī as having urged Bhīmasena in making that perilous offer, can hardly have been in the mind of Bhīmasena at that time. They are the reasons of a cool calculating politician, such as Bhīmasena surely was not. Half the value of Bhīmasena's noble chivalry would be lost if it were supposed to have proceeded from such sordid considerations.

The account of the meeting between Bhīmasena and Duryodhana practically follows the Mahābhārata. Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa however makes one material change. In the Mahābhārata it is not Bhīmasena, but Yudhiṣṭhira, who addresses taunting words to Duryodhana and thus forces him to come out. It is again Yudhiṣṭhira who makes the proposal referred to in stanza 10. As Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa wanted Yudhiṣṭhira to be engaged somewhere else, he made this change. The poet has also introduced a change in the account of Duryodhana's discovery. According to the Mahābhārata, Kṛpa, Kṛtavarman and Aśvatthāman, while holding a conversation with Duryodhana, who was in the lake, were overheard by some hunters, who carried the news to Bhīmasena, who in turn imparted it to Yudhiṣṭhira. They then all went to that place in company with Kṛṣṇa.

Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa is at pains to describe this scene in some detail, because he wants to show both these great warriors at their best in the hour of their last combat. When Bhīmasena observed that dejection had overcome Duryodhana as he cast his glance on the battle-field, where



not a single friend of his was in sight, his nature at once underwent a change. His usual sarcasm forsook him and in a spirit of noble chivalry he offered him the choice of fighting with any one of Pāṇḍavas. The fate of these brothers trembled in the balance as Duryodhana cast his angry glance at Bhīmasena and Arjuna. Not to speak of Yudhiṣṭhira and the two sons of Mādrī, if Duryodhana had elected to fight a mace-fight with Arjuna, well, the Pāṇḍavas would have been nowhere. If Bhīmasena showed himself to be noble and chivalrous, Duryodhana was still more so. A great warrior disdains to fight with an unequal. The noble lion would refuse to harm a jackal. So Duryodhana chose Bhīmasena for his adversary. The Pāṇḍavas had staked all their fortune on Duryodhana's honour as a warrior and Duryodhana amply justified their confidence. This last touch in the character-sketch of the fallen monarch makes even his fall noble and dignified.

The three other scenes are full of action and their main interest lies in the delineation of the character of Yudhiṣṭhira. In fact Yudhiṣṭhira forms the central figure of the sixth Act, as Duryodhana is of the fourth. But the difference is that in the fourth, Duryodhana is not a new personality to us. But here we make acquaintance with Yudhiṣṭhira for the first time. He has been referred to a few times before and that is all we know of him. There are some very fine traits in Yudhiṣṭhira's character, which a casual reader is very likely to miss, under the influence of the incredible credulity which Yudhiṣṭhira displays in his conversation with Cārvāka. First, then, at the very commencement of the Act, this pious monarch is shown to us as bent down under a heavy load of anxiety caused by the dreadful vow of Bhīmasena. Reading between the lines we can also detect the stings of his conscience, which tells him that he himself is at the bottom of the whole trouble.



The most important trait of his character is of course his unequalled affection for his brothers. His vow of committing suicide in the absence of even one of his brothers, though by the way not quite worthy of a Kṣatriya, eloquently proclaims his fraternal affection. Though intensely loving all his younger brothers, Yudhiṣṭhira seems to love Bhīmasena most. His condition on learning the false news of Bhīmasena's death becomes truly pathetic. He is so overpowered by the calamity that he consciously neglects his Kṣatriya's duty of fighting to the last with the killer of his brother and prepares to throw himself in the fire along with Draupadī. But it is to his credit that at the critical moment he gathers up courage and rises to the full height of a Kṣatriya and fearlessly advances to fight with him whom he considers to be the killer of Bhīmasena and Arjuna. This clearly shows that he was no coward and that his earlier unwillingness to meet Duryodhana had proceeded purely from a feeling of hopelessness, created by the false news of Bhīmasena's death, which had been conveyed to him.

But the credulity, with which Yudhiṣṭhira so implicitly believes the words of Cārvāka and which at first impresses us as being such a prominent trait of his character, seems almost ridiculous and lowers in no small measure his character in our eyes. Perhaps he was led away by the outward appearance of Cārvāka. A pious man himself, he could not but rely on the words of one who appeared to be an ascetic. Besides affection deprived him of the power of discrimination, so much so that he actually forgot the hopeful message of Kṛṣṇa and the fact that the Lord would not encourage him falsely. Thus this credulity, though manifestly a weakness of character, proceeds from the noble sentiment of fraternal affection, carried to excess and when we realise this, our condemnation of Yudhiṣṭhira in this



respect loses much of its sting. The truth would appear to be that Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa was helpless in the matter. A consummate delineator of pathos, he had set his heart in this Act to depict the pathetic condition of Yudhiṣṭhira and Draupadī as it would be on the death of Bhīmasena. For this purpose he somehow wanted them to believe that Bhīmasena was dead, and, as such belief was ordinarily impossible, it was inevitable that they should appear credulous when they did actually entertain such belief. It would thus be seen that the poet had to depict Yudhiṣṭhira to be weak in this respect in order to be able to depict the kind of pathos that formed his main topic in this Act?

And the poet's success in the delineation of this pathos is great. There are few figures in Sanskrit dramatic literature so pathetic as Yudhiṣṭhira in this Act. Though we do not like the un-Kṣatriya-like way of his lamentation, we fully appreciate the brotherly affection that unsettles his mind and dries up what Duryodhana has termed the kṣatradharmakārkaśyam in him. While Duryodhana also loves his brothers with equal intensity, his lamentations are always mixed up with a stern determination to have his revenge on the murderer of his brothers. But Yudhiṣṭhira seeks no revenge. He perhaps thinks that revenge will not give him back his brother. The difference between the two monarchs, though they love their younger brothers with equal ardour, is that while Duryodhana is a true Kṣatriya with a predominance of rajas in him, Yudhiṣṭhira is almost a Brāhmaṇa in whom sattva predominates. In the armour of a Kṣatriya he finds himself ill at ease. Overpowered by sorrow, he loses his peculiar Kṣatriya lustre and resorts to the softness of a Brāhmaṇa. What Duryodhana said happened in the case of Droṇa, happened exactly in the case of Yudhiṣṭhira.

Equally pathetic is the picture of Draupadī. At the terrible news of the death of Bhīmasena, whom she loves so



tenderly and on whom she has pinned all her faith of having her wrongs avenged, she loses the balance of her mind and turns almost insane. The shock is too great for her soft affectionate heart. She cannot withstand it. Though she says only a few things, her words are harrowing. She reminds one of Shakespeare's Ophelia. Both find themselves unable to bear terrible shocks and lose their heads. Then again Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa well brings out the nervous confusion in which Buddhimatikā and Jayandhara are thrown, when they see their master and mistress on the point of committing suicide. The maid actually throws herself before Yudhiṣṭhira and Draupadī in order to prevent them from entering fire and the old chamberlain is moved to tears in spite of his grey hair.

It will perhaps be realised by many that the situation, as it is developed by the poet in this Act, is admirably suited for a tragedy. The poet could very easily have made Yudhiṣṭhira and Draupadī consign themselves to fire before Bhīmasena arrived on the scene. Then Bhīmasena and others would also kill themselves. In fact this would appear to be the natural development of his situation. But then, Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa could not do so. First, because such a change in the account of the Mahābhārata would have proved too sweeping for any Hindu audience to digest. Secondly, rules of Sanskrit dramaturgy forbade the tragic ending of a drama.



### III THE SOURCE OF THE VENĪSAMHĀRA AND THE CHANGES INTRODUCED THEREIN BY THE POET

The Mahābhārata has proved a fruitful source of inspiration to Sanskrit poets,<sup>(g)</sup> the writers of narrative poems or kāvyas as well as the writers of dramas<sup>(h)</sup>. The best known drama in Sanskrit, the Abhijñānaśākuntala of Kālidāsa, is based on an episode occurring in the Mahābhārata. Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's Venīsamhāra on the other hand is not based on any episode, but deals with the main story of the great epic. In a drama of six Acts the poet has, as it were, abridged the story of the Mahābhārata right up from the Udyogaparvan to the Śāntiparvan. Kṛṣṇa's mission of peace to the Kauravas, which marks the commencement of the drama, is described in the Udyogaparvan, while the

- (g) As a source of inspiration to poets the following description of the Mahābhārata occurs in the Ādiparvan of that epic itself :—

सर्वेषां कविमुख्यानामुपजीव्यो भाविष्यति ।

पर्जन्य इव धृतानामक्षयो भारतद्रुमः ॥ १. ९३

अनाश्रित्येदमाख्यानं कथां भुवि न विद्यते

आहारमनपाश्रित्य शरीरस्येव धारणम् ॥ २. ३८८

इदं कविवरैः सर्वैराख्यानमुपजीव्यते ।

उदरप्रेक्षुमिर्भुजैरभिजात इवेभ्यः ॥ २०. ३८९

- (h) Out of the five Mahākāvyas the following four are based on the Mahābhārata: Kumārasambhava, Kirātārjuniya, Śisupālavadha and Naiṣadhīyacarita. —As regards dramas six of the thirteen dramas of Bhāsa derive their material from the Mahābhārata. The Abhijñānaśākuntala of Kālidāsa and the Bālabhārata of Rājasekhara are based on the Mahābhārata.

coronation of Yudhiṣṭhira, which is referred to at its close, takes place in the Śāntiparvan.

The story of the Mahābhārata is one of the most well-known stories among the Hindus. The selection of such a story for the plot of a drama entails its own disadvantages for the dramatist. He cannot introduce sweeping changes in the original which is so well-known. He cannot depict the various characters in any other light than the one with which people are most familiar. Otherwise his drama would cease to be realistic and he would be condemned in society and would hardly attain anything like popularity. Under these circumstances, the task of a poet who makes such selection becomes very difficult. He has to proceed with absolute caution. But if in spite of these difficulties he introduces changes, which not only are not unpalatable to the people but actually succeed in changing their ideas about the original story, he indeed must be regarded as a very skilful dramatist. Something of this kind has occurred in the case of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa, as will be clear from the following paragraphs, where we put down, Act by Act, the important changes that Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa has introduced in his original.

Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's most important change, a change on which the action of the whole drama is in fact based, is indicated by the very title of the drama. Draupadī was dragged in the gambling hall by Duśśāsana, who had caught hold of her by her hair, which consequently became dishevelled. Duryodhana further insulted her by baring his thigh in her presence. Bhīmasena vowed that he would kill Duśśāsana and drink the blood from his chest. He further vowed that he would kill Duryodhana and, with his hands gory with the Kaurava monarch's blood, would tie up the dishevelled hair of Draupadī. Draupadī was therefore to allow her hair to remain in that loose disordered



condition till Bhīmasena fulfilled his vow. Now the title Venīsaṁhāra refers to this tying up of Draupadī's dishevelled hair by Bhīmasena after killing Duryodhana and this particular part of Bhīmasena's vow is Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's own invention, as we have already seen before. Thus this tying up of the hair, which is the most important event in the drama and which gives the play its name, is the poet's innovation.

The importance of this innovation can hardly be exaggerated. With his drama Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa has succeeded in moulding the thoughts of the people so much that the ordinary reader has no idea that there is anything new in this vow of Bhīmasena. Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's glory lies just in this that what really represents the change which his genius has introduced is generally accepted as the version of the original itself.

The first Act as a whole follows the account of the Mahābhārata in its representation of the failure of Kṛṣṇa's mission of peace and the consequent commencement of hostilities. The entire setting of the drama is of course Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's and it must be remembered that when we speak of the changes introduced we only refer to the changes in the main story. Yet even in this first Act there are two minor changes introduced for dramatic purpose. It is here represented that Kṛṣṇa was sent to make peace on the condition of a grant of five villages. In the Mahābhārata this specific offer had previously been made through Sañjaya and had been rejected by Duryodhana. After this Kṛṣṇa was sent to make a second and final attempt at amicable settlement. He had no instructions regarding any specific terms on which to conclude peace. Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa makes this change for a double reason. He did not want to refer to Sañjaya's mediation, because that was not much important. But he wanted to bring out the peaceful intentions of



Yudhiṣṭhira as revealed in the offer of peace for five villages. He therefore combined that offer with Kṛṣṇa's mission. He further wanted to bring out the vyutpatti or significance in this demand for five villages, the significance which according to him constituted his improvement on the tame demand of the Mahābhārata. Reference to the demand for five villages was thus necessary. The second change introduced refers to what happened at the court of Duryodhana when Kṛṣṇa went there. Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa represents that Duryodhana tried to secure the person of the Lord by binding him and that the Lord frustrated his attempts by a display of his universe-form. In the Mahābhārata no such attempt is actually made. Only a plan is hatched to capture the Lord, but it is found out and Duryodhana is severely reprimanded for it by his father. Similarly, in the Mahābhārata the viśvarūpa was shown not for the purpose of driving away the Kauravas, but merely for exhibiting his power after the reproof had been administered to Duryodhana by Dhṛtarāṣṭra. This change that Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa introduces is dramatically very effective. In this case Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa has so succeeded in moulding our ideas about the incident, that the ordinary man is hardly aware of the fact that the Mahābhārata does not refer to an actual attempt being made to seize the person of the Lord. <sup>(hh)</sup>

The second Act is purely a creation of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa. Strange as it may appear to many, the Mahābhārata does not mention Bhānumatī at all. No reference to Duryodhana's wife is there made. Bhānumatī is thus

- (hh) This incident of Duryodhana's attempt to secure the person of the Lord by force is made popular by a picture of the same drawn by Raja Ravi Varma. It will be noticed from the above that the basis of the picture is not the Mahābhārata, but the Veṇīśaṁhāra.



the poet's own creation. Consequently the meeting between Draupadī and Bhānumatī, referred to in the first Act, is also an invention of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa.

Stanza 25 <sup>(i)</sup> of the second Act refers to the indignities that were offered to Draupadī in the gambling hall. At the command of Duryodhana Duśśāsana dragged her into the hall by her hair and garment and addressed to her the insulting words 'A cow, a cow'! This is what we gather from this stanza. But the Mahābhārata does not confirm this account. As a matter of fact there is some discrepancy in the epic itself regarding this incident. Thus, according to the Sabhāparvan, when after the anudyūta the Pāṇḍavas started for the forest, dressed in barks, Duśśāsana ridiculed them in unstinted language and addressed the words 'Gauḥ, gauḥ' to Bhīmasena and not to Draupadī <sup>(j)</sup>. Later on in the Karṇaparvan, when Bhīmasena kills Duśśāsana and drinks his blood, he twice refers to the words 'Gauḥ, gauḥ', as having been uttered by Duśśāsana. The second reference suggests that other people also had joined him in uttering

(i) This stanza is as follows:—

हस्ताकृष्टविलोलकेशयसना दुःशासननाज्ञया  
पाञ्चाली मम राजचक्रपुरतो गौर्गौरिति व्याहृता ।  
तास्मिन्नेव स किं नु गाण्डिवधरो नासीत् पृथानन्दनो  
यूनः क्षत्रियवंशजस्य कृतिनः क्रोधास्पदं किं न तत् ॥

(j) Read:—

एवं ब्रुवाणमजिनैर्विवासितं  
दुःशासनस्तं ( मीमसेनं ) परिनुत्यति स्म ।  
मध्ये कुरुणा धर्मनिबद्धमार्गं  
गौर्गौरिति स्माह्वयन् युष्मत्तलज्जः ॥ १९ अध्याय १९

these words. <sup>(k)</sup> But both these references are general and they do not specify whom exactly these words were addressed and on what occasion. On the other hand from the words which Bhīmasena addresses to Duryodhana in the Śalyaparvan, after the latter had been laid low on the battlefield, we gather that it was Duryodhana himself who uttered these words with reference to Draupadī, when she was dragged in the assembly dressed in her only garment, and that even other people had taken up this cry. <sup>(l)</sup> Thus the original account of the incident not being uniform, Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa did well in representing it in the way he has done in stanza 25. For Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's representation is dramatically more effective.

The Praveśaka to the third Act is also the work of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa. Its dramatic importance lies in this that it absolves Bhīmasena from the sin of drinking human

(k) Read:—

उवाच तद् गोरिति यद् द्रुवाणे  
हृष्टो वदः कर्णमुद्योयनाभ्याम् ।... २०  
भीमेऽपि हत्वा तत्रैव दुःशासनमनर्णम् ।  
पूरयित्वाञ्जलिं ध्रुवो रुधिरस्योद्यनिःस्वनः ॥ ४१  
शृण्वतां लोकवीराणामिदं वचनमब्रवीत् ।  
एष ते रुधिरं कण्ठात् पिबामि पुरुषाधम ॥ ४२  
ब्रह्मीदानीं तु संहृष्टः पुनर्गोरिति गोरिति ।  
ते तदास्मान् प्रनृत्यन्ति पुनर्गोरिति गोरिति ॥ ४३  
तान् वयं प्रतिनृत्यामः पुनर्गोरिति गोरिति ॥..... ४४

—अध्याय ८३

(l) Read:—

ततो दुर्योधनं हत्वा भीमसेनः प्रतापवान् ।  
पातितं कौरवेन्द्रं तमुपगम्येदमब्रवीत् ॥ ३  
गोर्गोरिति पुरा मन्द द्रौपदीमेकवाससम् ।  
यत् सभायां हसन्नस्मांस्तदा वदसि कुर्मते ॥ ४  
तस्यावहासस्य फलमय त्वं समवाशुहि ।  
एवमुक्त्वा स वामेन पदा मौलिमुपासृजत् ॥ ५  
चेऽस्मान् पुरोपानृत्यन्त मूढा गोरिति गोरिति ।  
तान् वयं प्रतिनृत्यामः पुनर्गोरिति गोरिति ॥ ७

—अध्याय ५२



blood.<sup>(m)</sup> The main body of the third Act is concerned with the character sketches of Aśvatthāman and Karna and their quarrel. Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's change as regards the delineation of their character lies in exalting the character of Aśvatthāman and lowering that of Karna. As regards the actual quarrel the poet has evidently drawn upon Drona-parvan Adhyāyas 158 and 159. From these we learn that when Karna boasted of his strength and of his determination to kill the Pāṇḍavas, Kṛpa ridiculed him by pointing out the various occasions such as the battle at the capital of Virāṭa, on which Karna had an opportunity of meeting the Pāṇḍavas, but was able to do nothing. Karna in wrath declared he would cut the tongue of Kṛpa if he dared say those things again. At this Aśvatthāman rushed at Karna with a drawn sword and a scuffle between the two seemed imminent. Duryodhana and Kṛpa pacified them.<sup>(n)</sup> This

(m) Vide above our Critical Appreciation of this Interlude pp. 54-55

(n) In this connection read the following:—

कर्ण उवाच । परित्रातुमिह प्राप्नो यदि पार्थ पुंन्दरः ।  
 तमप्याशु पराजित्य ततो हन्तास्मि पाण्डवान् ॥ ५  
 एवं ब्रुवाणं कर्णं तु कृपः शास्त्रतोऽब्रवीत् ।  
 स्मयन्निव महाबाहुः क्षतपुत्रमिदं वचः ॥ १२  
 बहुशः कथ्यसे कर्ण कौरवस्य समीपतः ।  
 न तु ते विक्रमः कश्चिद् दृश्यते फलमेव वा ॥ १४  
 समागमः पाण्डुसुतैर्दृष्टे बहुशो युधि ।  
 सर्वत्र निर्जितश्चासि पाण्डवैः क्षतनन्दन ॥ १५  
 एकमुक्तस्तु रथियः प्रहसन् भरतर्षभ ॥ ४८  
 अत्रवीचि तदा कर्णो युरु शास्त्रतं कृपम् ।...  
 त्वं तु विप्रश्च वृद्धश्च अशक्तश्चापि संयुगे ।  
 कृतस्नेहश्च पार्थेयु मोहान्मामवमन्यसे ॥ ५६  
 यद्येवं वक्ष्यसे भूयो ममाप्रियमिह द्विज ।  
 ततस्ते खड्गमुग्रम्य जिह्वा छेदस्यामि दुर्मते ॥ ५७

—अध्याय १५८

[ Continued on the next page ]

incident occurred before the death of Droṇa. Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa introduces several changes in this to suit his purpose. First, the quarrel is depicted as taking place after Droṇa's slaughter. Kṛpa has nothing to do with it. It proceeds from Karṇa's malicious remark. But in the Mahābhārata it is Aśvatthāman who takes the offensive. These changes are of course intended to exalt the Brāhmaṇa warrior and to lower Karṇa.

The fourth Act is mainly narrative and generally follows the original in its account of the slaughter of Duśśāsana and the death of Viṣasena. The description of the fight is couched in terms which remind one of such descriptions in the great epic.

[Continued from the preceding page]

तथा परुषितं दृष्ट्वा स्रुतपुत्रेण मातुलम् ।  
 खड्गसुद्यम्य वेगेन द्रोणिरस्यपतद् द्रुतम् ॥ १  
 अश्वत्थामोवाच । यदुर्जुनयुष्मांस्तथ्यान् कर्तव्यान् नराधम ।  
 शूरं द्वेषात् सुदुर्बुद्धे त्वं भर्त्सयसि मातुलम् ॥ ३  
 क्व ते वीर्यं क्व चान्त्राणि यं त्वां निर्जित्य संयुगे ।  
 गाण्डीवधन्या हतवान् प्रेक्षतस्ते जयद्रथम् ॥ ५  
 कर्णं पश्य सुदुर्बुद्धे तिष्ठेदानीं नराधम ।  
 एष तेऽद्य शिरः कायाङ्घ्र्यामि सुकुर्मते ॥ ९  
 तमुच्यतं तु वेगेन राजा दुर्योधनः स्वयम् ।  
 न्यवारयन्महोत्तजाः कृपश्च द्विपदां वरः ॥ १०  
 कर्ण उवाच । शूरोऽयं समरश्लाघी कुर्मतिश्च द्विजाधमः ।  
 आसादयतु मद्वीर्यं मुञ्चेमं कुरुसत्तम ॥ ११  
 अश्वत्थामोवाच । तेषितत्सम्यतेऽस्माभिः सूतात्मज सुकुर्मते ।  
 दर्पमुत्सिक्तमेतत्ते फाल्गुनो नाशयिष्यति ॥ १२  
 दुर्योधन उवाच । अश्वत्थामन् प्रसीदस्व क्षन्तुमर्हसि मानद ॥  
 कोपः खलु न कर्तव्यः स्रुतपुत्रं कथंचन ॥ १३  
 त्वयि कर्णे कूपे द्रोणे मद्राजेऽथ सौवले ।  
 महत् कार्यं समासक्तं प्रसीद द्विजसत्तम ॥ १४



The fifth Act is all the work of the poet. Though the characters that take part therein are familiar, the situation is the creation of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa.

The sixth Act deviates from the account of the Mahābhārata in some important respects. First, the new vow of Bhīmasena that he would kill Duryodhana on that very day, or would commit suicide in case he failed to do so, is Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's invention. He invents it in order to bring out more prominently Bhīmasena's adventurous nature. In this drama Duryodhana is represented as having run away and concealed himself in a lake in order to falsify Bhīmasena's vow and thus indirectly bring about the ruin of the Pāṇḍavas. In the Mahābhārata he repairs to a lake in order to escape from the clutches of the Pāṇḍavas, when he finds that all his people are killed and not a single soldier left alive to fight for him. In both, the element of fear is at the bottom of this disappearance. Though in the drama Duryodhana denies that he ran away through fear, we cannot believe him. This fear is incompatible with his proud nature and is a serious blot on his character. But the poet was tied down by his original. He has, however, tried to justify in some measure the conduct of Duryodhana by inventing the new vow of Bhīmasena. Duryodhana knew he had now no hope of victory against the Pāṇḍavas. But their ruin might be accomplished if Bhīmasena could in some way be made to fail in his vow. He would then commit suicide. Yudhiṣṭhira would also follow. Others might most probably do the same. Here was thus an opportunity, offered to Duryodhana by Bhīmasena's rash vow, of doing what he had no hope of accomplishing in open fight. Why should he not take advantage of this? This idea also was in the mind of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's Duryodhana when he entered the lake and it was quite natural.



That fear was not the sole cause of Duryodhana's resorting to the lake was shown by the very fact that he came up. If he had chosen to remain inside, Bhīmasena could not have brought him out. But his Kṣatriya pride was roused by the cutting words of Bhīmasena and, forgetting the above-mentioned reason of his disappearance, which after all represented the reason of a cold calculator, he rose up in the heat of the moment. It will thus be seen that though the poet has followed his original in representing this incident of Duryodhana's disappearance, he gives it a different turn by inventing the vow of Bhīmasena, with a view to lessen the ignominy of Duryodhana's conduct. This then constitutes the second purpose which the invention of the new vow of Bhīmasena serves.

The way in which, according to the drama, Duryodhana was traced to the lake and ultimately forced to come out also differs from the Mahābhārata. According to that account Kṛpa, Kṛtavarman and Aśvatthāman were overheard by some hunters, while they were conversing with Duryodhana who was in the lake. The hunters carried the news to Bhīmasena, who reported it to Yudhiṣṭhira and then all of them including Kṛpa went to the lake. Further, in the Mahābhārata it was Yudhiṣṭhira and not Bhīmasena as in the drama, that addressed all those bitter words to Duryodhana that ultimately forced him to come out. Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa entrusted this business to Bhīmasena for a double purpose. First, he wanted Yudhiṣṭhira to be elsewhere engaged. Secondly, it was more appropriate that Bhīmasena, who was to give him battle, should talk in this vein to Duryodhana and force him to rise up. Then again in the Mahābhārata it is Yudhiṣṭhira who gives Duryodhana the option of fighting with any one of the Pāṇḍavas.



Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa assigns this work to Bhīmasena for a similar double purpose.<sup>(nn)</sup>

Lastly, the scene with Cārvāka is Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's own invention. Cārvāka no doubt figured in the Mahābhārata, but there he played a different part. Yudhiṣṭhira made a triumphal entry into Hastināpura after the war was ended and with great pomp entered the assembly-hall of the palace. Brāhmaṇas gathered there to congratulate him and were being duly honoured by the victorious emperor. The demon Cārvāka had gone there, disguised as a Brāhmaṇa. Declaring himself to be the spokesman of the assembled Brāhmaṇas, he denounced Yudhiṣṭhira as being the exterminator of his race. The Brāhmaṇas were surprised. They disowned him and, proclaiming him to be the demon-friend of Duryodhana, burnt him on the spot to ashes, with their humkāras. Such is the account of Cārvāka in the Mahābhārata.<sup>(o)</sup> Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's object in the sixth Act was to depict the pathetic condition of Yudhiṣṭhira as it would be on the death of Bhīmasena. For that purpose he made use of the demon Cārvāka, the friend of Duryodhana, who, disguised as an ascetic conveyed to Yudhiṣṭhira the false news of Bhīmasena's death. In view of the ultimate purpose the poet had in view, it must be remarked that the use to which he put the character of Cārvāka supplied by the Mahābhārata was a highly ingenious one.

From the above survey it will be clear that though Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa bases his drama on the Mahābhārata there are many things in the play which are his own and which proclaim his dramatic genius.

(nn) Read:—‘ततश्च वृकोदरेणाभिहितम्—अयि भोः कौरवराज, कृतं बन्धुनाश-  
दर्शनमन्युना । मेवं विषादं कृथाः पर्याप्ताः पाण्डवाः समरायाहमसहाय इति ।

पञ्चानां मन्यसेऽस्माकं ये सुयोधे सुयोधन ।

दक्षितस्यात्तश्च तेन तेऽस्तु रणोत्सवः ॥ १०

—Act vi, p. 152

(o) Vide Śāntiparvan adhyāya 37.



#### IV WHO IS THE HERO OF THE VENĪSAMHĀRA ?

There are three men in this drama, who can be said to be putting forward rival claims for being considered the hero viz. Duryodhana, Yudhiṣṭhira and Bhīmasena. In a play based on the story of the Mahābhārata, this was to a certain extent inevitable. For, all these three are first-class characters. The question was further rendered doubtful by Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's unskilful handling of the plot, inasmuch as he did not give to one of these three such preponderating importance as to raise him automatically to the position of the hero. Thus it is that this rather unusual question as to who the hero of the piece is comes at all to be discussed. We shall therefore proceed to consider the relative value of the claims of each of these three.

If the hero of a drama means the man, who captures our attention most, whose personality is most interesting and on the delineation of whose character the poet has most expended his skill, then surely Duryodhana must be regarded the hero of the Venīsamhāra. From the time when we first make his acquaintance in the second Act up to almost the very end of the play he is never absent from our vision. In the second, fourth and fifth Acts he is of course the central figure. Though the interest of the third Act lies elsewhere, Duryodhana is present there for quite a considerable time and forms a very interesting figure from the point of view of his character. In the sixth Act he does not enter on the stage, certainly, but his actions are of dreadful importance to us and some of the finest traits of his character are brought out in this Act. Then again from the point of view of the delineation of character, Duryodhana is of absorb-



ing interest. No other character has received so much attention from the poet and been depicted in such varied aspects. Duryodhana thus possesses all the elements about him that should make him the hero of the play. But he has nothing to do with the main purpose of the drama viz. the tying up of Draupadi's dishevelled hair. He therefore cannot be regarded the hero of the Venīsamhāra. It must at the same time be remarked that in delineating his character and in assigning to him the position of such commanding importance, the author shows himself to be lacking in sense of proportion, in so far as he has made him more interesting and captivating than the proper hero of the drama.

Yudhiṣṭhira is the next claimant. He is as a matter of fact regarded as the hero of the drama by commentators and rhetoricians. His claims are based on a double ground. First, he is the head of the party that ultimately succeeds and has thus the advantage of his natural position. Secondly, towards the close of the sixth Act, Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa has depicted him in such a way as to create reasonable grounds in our minds to suppose that he is meant to be the hero of the play. One of the formal functions of the hero of a drama is to pronounce the final blessing in the form of the *bharatavākya*. Duṣyanta, Purūravas, Agnimitra, Rāma, Mādhava and others, all the undisputed heroes in their respective plays, do it. In the Venīsamhāra Yudhiṣṭhira utters the final benedictory stanza. So there is nothing unreasonable in regarding him the hero of this play. But as against these claims of Yudhiṣṭhira it has to be noted that he is the least interesting of these three figures. In fact during the course of the first five Acts nowhere does he attract our attention in any way. We even do not expect to see him play such important part in the sixth Act, as far as our expectations based on the earlier acts are concerned. Surely such a man could not



have been meant to be the hero of the drama. Secondly, even like Duryodhana, he is not directly connected with the tying of Draupadi's hair, the principal theme of the drama. As regards his uttering the *bharatavākya* it may be pointed out that he does so because of the precedence that belongs to him as the eldest of the Pāṇḍavas. His position as the head of the family secures him that advantage. But it cannot surely exalt him to the position of the hero of the play.

Lastly comes Bhīmasena. When the claims of Duryodhana and Yudhiṣṭhira are set aside, Bhīmasena easily attains the position of the hero. It is he who has vowed and who carries out the tying of Draupadi's disordered hair, a circumstance which gives the drama its title. The *Venīsaṁhāra* is thus directly connected with him. He is therefore the natural hero. Apart from this, the poet has tried, though not as much as we wish, to sustain our interest in his character and to keep him before our vision from the beginning to the end. This will be clear if we take a short survey of the six Acts in so far as they relate to him.

The interest of the first Act of course mainly centres round Bhīmasena. The second Act which is devoted to Duryodhana and Bhānumatī and their love-affair is not altogether free from references to him. The incident of Bhānumatī's dream clearly keeps us in mind of Bhīmasena and his vow of killing the hundred Kauravas. Further, the scene in which the Kañcukin hurriedly enters to announce the breaking of Duryodhana's flag-staff by the dreadful wind is so managed as powerfully to bring to our notice, once more, Bhīmasena and his vow of breaking Duryodhana's thighs. Stanza 28 of this Act also reminds us of Bhīmasena. The third Act no doubt diverts our mind not only from Bhīmasena but also from the *Venīsaṁhāra* itself, but even here towards the close Bhīmasena is mentioned as being on the point of accomplishing his vow of killing



Duśśāsana and drinking his blood. The fourth Act records the actual accomplishment of this vow of Bhīmasena, which marks a step forward towards the devoutly-to-be-wished consummation of the tying of Draupadi's hair. In Sundaraka's description of the fight Bhīmasena also figures to a certain extent. Though the fifth Act is connected with Duryodhana and his affairs, Bhīmasena is specially brought on the stage probably with a view to satisfy the longing of the audience that has not *seen* him for a long time. The sixth Act marks the final triumph of Bhīmasena and there is no question of our interest in him flagging in any way there.

It will thus be seen that Bhīmasena and his vow have been consistently kept before our eyes, more or less, from the beginning to the close of the drama. Bhīmasena is thus the proper hero. Though this conclusion may be accepted, it must be pointed out all the same that the character of Bhīmasena has not been made so interesting as that of Duryodhana, nor have so many traits of his character been brought out as in the case of Duryodhana. Thus in comparison with Duryodhana he suffers in this respect. This, as observed before, must be put down to the author's lacking in sense of proportion.

## V WHICH IS THE PREVAILING SENTIMENT IN THE VENĪSAMHĀRA ?

According to canons of Sanskrit dramaturgy a drama may contain more than one sentiment, but only one of them should be the principal or *āṅgin*. The letter of the rule says that this principal sentiment should be either *śṛṅgāra* (love) or *vīra* (heroic).<sup>(p)</sup> Commentators, adhering to the strict letter of this rule, try to prove that the prevailing sentiment in the *Venīsamhāra* is *vīra* or the heroic. This, we think, is not right. For we have to look in such cases to the spirit, rather than to the letter, of the rule concerned. And the spirit of the rule shows that one sentiment should be the principal and the others should be subordinate to it. *Anandavardhana* takes the same view.<sup>(q)</sup> Otherwise in a drama like the *Uttararāmacarita*, where *karuṇa* sentiment predominates, we shall have to prove somehow that either *śṛṅgāra* or *vīra* is the prevailing sentiment. Similarly in the *Venīsamhāra* it will be found that *karuṇa* is the prevailing sentiment. And this can be easily seen from the following considerations.

(p) Read *Sāhityadarpaṇa* vi :—

नाटकं ख्यातवृत्तं स्यात् पञ्चसन्धिसमन्वितम् ।...७

सुखदुःखसमृद्धिं नानारसनिरन्तरम् ।...८

एक एव भवेदङ्गी शृङ्गारो वीर एव वा ।

अङ्गमन्ये रसाः सर्वे कार्यो निर्वहणेऽद्भुतः ॥ १०

(q) Note *Dvanyāloka* iii. 21

प्रसिद्धेऽपि प्रवृत्तानां नानारसनिवन्धने ।

एको रसोऽङ्गीकर्तव्यस्तेषामुत्कर्षमिच्छता ॥



In this drama there are four prominent sentiments developed viz. karuṇa or pathos, vīra or heroic sentiment, which in some places has an admixture of raudra or frightful, śṛṅgāra or love and bibhatsa or disgust. Of these the last is confined to the Praveśaka of the third Act and śṛṅgāra to the second and hence they can hardly lay claim to be regarded as the principal sentiment of the drama. Between karuṇa and vīra, karuṇa, in the delineation of which Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa is a past master, definitely appears to be the principal. If we minutely survey the whole of the drama, we find that it is karuṇa which inheres in every Act and to which all other sentiments are made subordinate.

The first Act with its all-dominating figure of Bhīmasena, who everywhere represents vīra, is certainly predominantly heroic. Yet even here the presence of Draupadī, who, to speak in Bhavabhūti's words, is really karuṇasya mūrtiḥ, brings in the poet's favourite pathos. Indeed, the heroism of Bhīmasena would seem to heighten the pathos of Draupadī's condition; for though he had the ability to avenge her wrongs, he could not do so owing to his ultimate dependence on Yudhiṣṭhira's will. The pathos of the first Act reaches its height in the leave-taking scene between Draupadī and Bhīmasena. The second Act principally treats of śṛṅgāra, of course. But the picture of Bhānumatī with her affectionate heart torn with fear, created by the ominous dream, is pathetic enough. Even to the actual love scene between Duryodhana and Bhānumatī a kind of pathetic interest attaches, for we know that Duryodhana is a doomed man and his indulgence proceeds from rank recklessness. The third Act exhibits karuṇa and vīra in equal degree. Aśvatthāman, bemoaning the death of his father represents karuṇa and the quarrel between Aśvatthāman and Karna develops vīra. The following three Acts exhibit

karuṇa pure and simple and in some of their situations Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa is seen at his best in the delineation of pathos.

It will thus be seen that while karuṇa or pathos is present in the first two Acts as a subordinate sentiment more or less, it divides the third Act equally with vīra and is the prevailing sentiment of the remaining three Acts. It must, therefore, be pronounced to be the aṅgin or the principal sentiment of the drama.



## VI TIME AND PLACE OF THE DRAMATIC ACTION

The classical drama of Europe knows of what are known as *Des Trois Unités* or the Three Unities. They are the Unity of Time, the Unity of Place and the Unity of Action. The Greeks first developed them and European dramatists generally followed Greece. The Unity of Time meant that the action of the drama should not run over a period longer than a day, or the time actually required for its representation on the stage. The Unity of Place similarly required that the events described in the drama should be represented as having occurred at one particular place only or its surroundings, or that the action should not be shifted from one place to another as it advances from scene to scene or Act to Act. The Unity of Action again laid down that there should be a logical connection between the various incidents of the drama and that they should all lead up to one central action which must never be lost sight of.

The Unities of Time and Place are based on the idea of naturalness. It was thus thought unnatural that an action running over a period of months or years together should be condensed within the short period of a few hours that were required for its representation on the stage. Similarly the ancients perhaps thought it improbable that the same stage which once represented one place should be made to stand for very many different localities, if the action were to change its abode now and then. The Unity of Action, however, was essential for the success of the drama as such. For it is easy to see if the various incidents were disconnected and did not lead up to a definite dénouement, they would scarcely constitute a drama. Thus while



the Unities of Time and Place were ultimately based on the more or less crude ideas of naturalness and probability as entertained by the ancients, who could not stand the necessary strain on their imagination, the Unity of Action had its foundation in strict scientific conception.

The Greek dramatists strictly observed these Unities not only in their comedies, but even in their tragedies, where it was more difficult to do so. The French dramatists in general and the classical school of English dramatists led by Ben Jonson in the golden era of English literature, were close followers of the Greeks. Sidney in his *Apology for Poetry* severely criticised those dramatists of his day that violated the Unities of Time and Place and his criticism, expressed in humorous language as it is, well deserves to be read. Shakespeare, the pioneer of the romantic school of English dramatists, represents a revolt against these three Unities. Almost all his historical dramas violate the Unities of Time and Place, the *Winter's Tale* being the most offending in this respect. The introduction of an underplot and the mingling of the tragic and the comic element, so common in Shakespeare and his school, were a direct violation of the Greek idea of the Unity of Action, but these in Shakespeare have been so managed as not to sin against the real unity of action that really counts in a drama.

Neither the Sanskrit dramatists nor the Sanskrit writers on dramaturgy evolved these three Unities as such. The essential unity of action was however secured by such devices as the arthaprakṛtis, avasthās and sandhis. But the introduction of an underplot (vide prominently the *Mṛcchakatika*) and the intermingling of the tragic and the comic elements were common in Sanskrit. The Unities of Time and Place were most flagrantly violated. The *Abhināśakuntala* for example represents an action



which runs over a period of six or seven years and in the *Uttararāmacarita* twelve years actually elapse between the first and the second Act. As regards place we find in the *Abhijñānaśākuntala* that while the scene of the first four Acts is laid in the penance-grove of Kāśyapa, the fifth and the sixth take us to Duśyanta's capital and in the seventh we have actually to descend from heaven on the lofty mountain Hemukūṭa. In the Sanskrit drama the action not only shifts from one place to another in this world, but is sometimes represented as taking place in the other world also. But one practice deserves to be noted in this connection. The Sanskrit dramatists generally confine the action of an act to one particular place or its surroundings, unless of course a journey is intended to be represented. Another curious fact to be observed is that the *Mālavikāgnimitra* of Kālidāsa rigidly follows the Unity of Place, for the entire action takes place in the king's palace and the surrounding garden. This may have been due to chance rather than to a consciousness of anything like the Greek rule of the Unity of Place.

Having made these general observations on the famous Three Unities, we proceed to lay down definitely the place and time of the various Acts constituting our play. The question of time is to be considered from two points of view: first, the time that is actually taken by the incidents as they are represented on the stage and secondly, the time that is supposed to have elapsed between the various Acts, which in the end comes to mean the same as the time occupied by the entire action of the play.

Act i—The scene is first laid somewhere in the palace of Yudhiṣṭhira not far from Draupadi's quadrangle. For we find that after Bhīmasena sends his ultimatum to Yudhiṣṭhira to inform him that he is going to break away from his authority, he haughtily moves about and Sahadeva



follows him.<sup>(r)</sup> Bhīmasena thinks he is going to the armoury, but as a matter of steps his steps are turned towards Draupadī's quadrangle.<sup>(s)</sup> Then both Bhīmasena and Sahadeva enter Draupadī's quadrangle where the rest of the action takes place.

The time appears to be the morning from about 8 A. M. to 10 A. M. Draupadī had gone to offer salutation to Gāndhārī and we know that this customary ceremony was performed immediately after getting up in the morning. For in the second Act Bhānumatī goes to Gāndhārī for a similar purpose immediately after leaving her bed in the morning. Then again the grief caused to Draupadī by the insulting remarks of Bhānumatī is quite fresh. For her face is still bedimmed with tears, as she approaches Bhīmasena.<sup>(t)</sup> This means that not much time has elapsed since the insult was received. So 8 A. M. to 10 A. M. in the morning accords well with the indications of time that we have for the action in this Act.

It is possible to find out the exact day and month of the action of the first Act. Towards the close of the Act we learn that the mission of Kṛṣṇa having failed, Yudhiṣṭhira orders hostilities to be commenced at once. So the action of the first Act takes place on the first day of the Mahābhārata war. Now the Mahābhārata war is supposed to have begun on the 13th day of the bright half of Mārga-

(r) Note the stage direction 'उद्धतं परिक्रामति' for Bhīmasena and 'तमेवानुगच्छन्' for Sahadeva after i. 12, p. 9.

(s) Read:—

भीमसेनः—सहदेव, गच्छ त्वं शुरुमनुवर्तस्व । अहमप्याशुधारं प्रविश्याशुध-  
सहायो भवानि ।

सहदेवः—आर्य नेदमाशुधारम् । पाञ्चाल्याश्चतुःशालकमिदम् ।

Act i, pp. 9-10.

(t) Read 'अये कथं याज्ञसेनी मुहुरूपदीयमानवाष्पटलस्थगितनयना आर्यसमीपमुप-  
सर्पति' ३. ५.



śirṣa. So this gives us the exact day and month of the action of the first Act.

There is however some difficulty in this calculation. In the Prologue the Sūtradhāra speaks of Śarad or the autumn as being the current season<sup>(u)</sup>. Śarad is constituted by the months of Āśvina and Kārtika. As Bhīmasena enters immediately after the Sūtradhāra's description of the season, the time of the action of the first Act must naturally be supposed to be Śarad. If this is so, how can the 13th day of the bright half of Mārgaśīrṣa be the day of the action of the first Act?

From the Mahābhārata we know that Kṛṣṇa went on his mission of peace to Duryodhana about the 13th day in the bright half of Kārtika. So the reference in the Prologue to Śarad as the season when Kṛṣṇa arrived at Yudhiṣṭhira's abode with a view to proceed to Duryodhana to negotiate peace is correct. But Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa ignores subsequent developments as recorded in the Mahābhārata. The epic tells us that about a week was spent in Kṛṣṇa's going to Hastināpura, his staying there for negotiating peace and his returning to the Pāṇḍavas on the failure of his mission. According to Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa all this happened in the course of an hour or two. For in the Prologue we learn about the arrival of Kṛṣṇa at Yudhiṣṭhira's residence with a view to go to Duryodhana and towards the close of the Act we come to know that he has returned on the failure of his mission of peace. Then again in the Mahābhārata, after the negotiations of peace prove unsuccessful, about three weeks elapse before hostilities actually commence.

- (u) Read 'ननु अमुमेव तावत्.....शरत्समयमाश्रित्य प्रवर्त्यतां संगीतकम्' p. 4. It should be noted that in the last Act too the poet makes reference to Śarad. Compare 'अथ तु बलवच्चया शरदा-तपस्य' p. 166.

This time is spent by both the sides in collecting their armies and moving them to Kurukṣetra and taking up battle positions there. But Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa represents the war to have commenced immediately after the return of Kṛṣṇa on the failure of his mission.

It will thus be seen that Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa is faithful to his original in representing Kṛṣṇa as having started on his mission of peace in Śarad. But the period of nearly a month, which elapses between this and the actual commencement of war, has been compressed by our poet into a couple of hours. This need not be considered to be a serious defect. For on the stage such shortening of time has often to be done.

Act ii—The scene of the Viṣkambhaka is laid in the harem of Duryodhana, where the Kañcukin is moving about as fast as his old legs can carry him in search of Queen Bhānumatī.

The action of the main Act takes place in the Bālo-dyāna, which was evidently a garden attached to the royal palace. After stanza 20 Duryodhana, Bhānumatī and her friend Suvaṇanā move up to the palace on the mountain of wood, situated in a part of the Bālo-dyāna. Here the rest of the action is gone through.

Thirteen days elapse between the close of the first Act and the commencement of the second. The end of the first Act sees the war commenced. In the interval Bhīṣma has been rendered *hors de combat* and Abhimanyu has been slaughtered.<sup>(v)</sup> The Mahābhārata tells us that Bhīṣma was

(v) Read:—

आशन्नग्रहणादखण्डपरशोस्तस्यापि जेता मुने-  
स्तापायास्य न पाण्डुसुभिरयं भीष्मः शरैः शायितः ।  
श्रीदानेकधनुर्वरारिबिजयश्चान्तस्य चैकाकिनो

बालस्यायमरातिलनभद्रः श्रीनोभिमन्योर्धाम् ॥ ii. 2



overthrown on the tenth day of the war and that Abhimanyu was killed on the thirteenth. The action of the second Act thus commences on the morning of the fourteen day. Another indication corroborates this conclusion. Towards the end of this Act we learn Arjuna's vow to kill Jayadratha before the sun sets on that day.<sup>(w)</sup> The Act closes with Duryodhana's departure to help Jayadratha. Arjuna was successful in carrying out his vow and we know from the Mahābhārata that Jayadratha met his death at the hands of Arjuna on the fourteenth day of the war. Thus the action of the second Act happens on the fourteenth day of the war.

The actual hours of the day appear to be from about 8 A. M. to 11 A. M. At the commencement of the Act we find that Bhānumatī has just returned from her dutiful call on Gāndhārī and has gone to the Bālodyāna for the performance of some sacred rites.<sup>(x)</sup> For this she must naturally have taken her bath. So 8 A. M. would appear to be the proper time for her going into the Bālodyāna. The description of the Bālodyāna, which the Kañcukin gives (Text pp. 30-31), contains clear indications that the time is the early morning.<sup>(y)</sup> Later on the sun grows difficult to look at.<sup>(z)</sup> This must be about 10 A. M. Then after a while the party moves to dāruparvataprasādā, where the rest of the action takes

(w) Read 'अथ खलु पुत्रवधामर्षितेन गाण्डीविजानस्तमिते दिवसनाथे तस्य (जयद्रथस्य) वधः प्रतिज्ञातः' Act ii, p. 50

(x) Read 'एषा मानुमती देवी पत्युः समरविजयाशंसया निर्वर्तितयुरपादवन्दनाद्य-प्रसृत्यारम्भनियमा बालोद्याने तिष्ठति' Act ii, p. 26

(y) Note 'प्रभातकालरमणीयमग्रतस्ते बालोद्यानम्' 'इदमपरममुष्मिन्कृषसि रमणीय-तरम्' Act ii, p. 31

(z) Read 'विगलत्संन्यारागप्रसन्नदुरालोकमण्डलो जातो मगवान् दिवसनाथः' 'पूरितप्रतिज्ञैव रिपुर्दृष्ट्येक्षणीयो जातो मगवान् सहस्रकिरणः' Act ii, pp. 39-40

place. This must have taken about an hour more. Thus the whole action of the second Act would occupy about three hours in the morning from 8 A. M. to 11 A. M.

Act iii—The scene of the Praveśaka to this Act is laid in the residence of the demon couple, not far from the battle-field. For from this place the demons are able to hear the tumult of the war and see what is actually happening there viz. the slaughter of Droṇa<sup>(a)</sup>. They also see Aśvatthāman advancing towards the battle-field.<sup>(b)</sup>

The first three scenes of the third Act, wherein Aśvatthāman, the charioteer and Kṛpa take part, occur in a place very near the battle-field, but not actually thereon. For, Aśvatthāman, being desirous to go to the actual theatre of the war, starts for it<sup>(c)</sup>, but before he actually reaches it, he sees the rout of the Kaurava armies and observes even great warriors like Karna running away. In this very place Droṇa's charioteer Aśvasena arrives and informs Aśvatthāman of the slaughter of Droṇa. It is also here that Kṛpa sees Aśvatthāman and the conversation between the two takes place.

The fourth scene, consisting of the dialogue between Duryodhana and Karna, and the fifth marked by the quarrel between Aśvatthāman and Karna, are laid in a region at some distance from the battle-field, though not very far

(a) Read:—

राक्षसी—अरे रुधिरप्रिय, किं नु खल्वेष महान् कलकलः श्रूयते ।

राक्षसः—यसागन्धे, एष खलु धृष्ट्यन्नेन द्रोगः केदोष्वाकृष्यासिपत्रेण व्यापाद्यते ।'

—Act iii, p. 59

(b) Read:—

राक्षसः—(नेपथ्याभिमुखमवलोक्य) यसागन्धे, एष खल्वन्ध्यामाकृष्टासिपत्र इत एवागच्छति ।

—Act iii, p. 60

(c) Note Aśvatthāman's words 'यावत् समरध्रुवमवतरामि' and his stage-direction 'सावदृश्यं परिकल्पयतो विलोक्य च'.



away from it. There is in this place a Nyagrodha tree in the shade of which the king and his friend are sitting.<sup>(d)</sup> Āśvatthāman and Kṛpa have to move over some distance before they arrive here.<sup>(e)</sup> Though the place is thus somewhat removed from the actual scene of operations, it is at the same time near enough for the party to be able to hear Bhīmasena's challenge to all Kaurava warriors to protect Duśśāsana who has fallen in his hands.<sup>(f)</sup>

It will thus be seen that the action of the third Act takes place in three different places near about the battle-field, though not actually thereon.

The time of the third Act is determined with reference to events described in its Praveśaka. From this we know that Ghaṭotkaca has been killed and his mother Queen Hidimbā is immersed in grief.<sup>(g)</sup> According to the Mahābhārata the death of Ghaṭotkaca took place at mid-night on the fourteenth day. This means that the action of the third Act belongs to the fifteenth day of the war. This is confirmed by another indication. Towards the close of the Praveśaka we learn from the demon's speech that Droṇa is

(d) Read 'कृपः—( विलोक्य ) वत्स, एष दुर्योधनः क्षत्रपुत्रेण सहास्यं न्यग्रोधच्छाया-  
याग्रपविष्टस्तिष्ठति । तदुपसर्पावः ।'—Act iii, p. 78

(e) Note the stage-direction 'परिक्रामतः' for Āśvatthāman and Kṛpa, when they decide to go to the region where Duryodhana is staying.

(f) For Bhīmasena's challenge see text pp. 88-89 and note especially the stage-direction 'सर्वे आकर्णयन्ति' given immediately after this.

(g) Read —

राक्षसः—अयि मुस्थिते ननु पुत्रशोकसंतसहृदयां स्वामिनीं हिदिम्बा-  
देवीं प्रेक्षितुं गतोऽस्मि ।

राक्षसी—रुधिरप्रिय, अद्यापि स्वामिन्या हिदिम्बादेव्या घटोत्कचशोको  
नोपशान्नाति ।

—Act iii, p. 56



being killed and early in the course of the third Act we get the news of Drona's decapitation. From the Mahābhārata we know that Drona's head was chopped off by Dhṛṣṭadyumna on the fifteenth day of the war. So the fifteenth is the day of the action of the third Act.

The actual hours of the action of the third Act would appear to be from about 1 P. M. to 2-30 P. M. These are fixed for the following considerations. First, the Mahābhārata says that Drona was decapitated in the afternoon of the fifteenth day. Secondly, it will be seen from below that our author describes the action of the third, fourth and fifth Acts as being almost continuous. Towards the end of the fifth Act there is a reference to the sun setting<sup>(h)</sup>. This was probably at 6-30 P. M. So the actions of Acts iii, iv and v must be assigned to afternoon hours closing with 6-30 P. M. That is why we have given 1 P. M. to 2-30 P. M. as the hours for the action of Act iii. There are two considerations which are favourable to these hours. Rudhirapriya, we know, is thirsty<sup>(i)</sup> and Duryodhana and Karna, we have already seen, are sitting in the shade of the Nyagrodha tree. This accords well with 1 P. M. to 2-30 P. M., which we have supposed to be hours of the action of this Act.

Act iv—The action of the fourth Act commences actually on the field of battle. Karna and Duryodhana had gone there to protect Duśśāsana from Bhīmasena. Arjuna engaged them both in order to facilitate the fulfilment of his brother Bhīmasena's vow with regard to Duśśāsana. In this fight Duryodhana was wounded and became unconscious. Seeing him in this helpless condition his charioteer

(h) Read 'अस्तं भास्वान् प्रयातः सह विपुमिरयं संहियन्ता बलानि ॥'

—vi 36 d

(i) Note Rudhirapriya's words 'बलवदस्मि विपासितः' Act iii, p. 56.



was removing him from the actual battlefield to a place of safety. This is how the Act commences.

Duryodhana's chariot is then taken to the same Nyagrodha tree, where Duryodhana and Karna were sitting and whence they had gone to the battle-field to help Duśśāsana. We now learn that this tree has thick foliage and is situated on the bank of a lotus-lake from which a cool and fragrant breeze is blowing<sup>(j)</sup>. This is the region where the action of the rest of the Act takes place. Thus a part of the actual battle-field and the Nyagrodha tree are the places of the action of the fourth Act.

About half an hour must be supposed to have elapsed between the end of the third Act and the commencement of the fourth. During this time Bhīmasena had his revenge on Duśśāsana and Duryodhana became wounded in his fight with Arjuna. Kṛpa also arrived on the battle-field and, encouraging the flying Kaurava army, was advancing towards Karna, who was now fighting single-handed with Arjuna.<sup>(k)</sup> Thus the actual hours of the action of the fourth Act, which commences half an hour after the end of the third, would be 3 P. M. to 5 P. M. During this time Sundaraka gives his description of the exploits and death of Vṛṣasena and delivers Karna's message to Duryodhana and returns with a counter-message from him to Karna.

Act v—The action in the whole of this Act takes place in the shade of the same Nyagrodha tree, where Duryodhana has been sitting right up from the middle of the

(j) Read 'अये, अयमसौ सरसीसरोजाविलोलनमुरमिश्रितलमातरिषसंवाहितसान्द्र-  
किसलयो न्यग्रोधपादपः।' Act iv, p. 94

(k) Read 'कथमेव.....प्रदत्तमात्मबलमाश्वासयन् कृपः किराटिनाभियुक्तमङ्गणजमनु-  
सरति'—Act iv, pp. 92-93

third Act, except for about half an hour when he had gone to the battle-field in his attempt to save his brother. It is here that Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Gāndhārī see their only surviving son <sup>(1)</sup> and it is here that all the subsequent events in this Act take place.

The actual hours of the action of this Act would be from 5 P. M. to 6-30 P. M. For, we know that the Act commences immediately after the fourth and that towards the end there is a reference to the sun setting.

It will thus be seen that the action of Acts iii, iv, and v is continuous and occupies, according to Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa one afternoon viz. that of the fifteenth day of the war. We have here to point out that in so depicting the action to be continuous, our poet departs from the Mahābhārata. In these three Acts of the drama we have the deaths of Droṇa, Duśśāsana, Viṣasena and Karna. Now according to the Mahābhārata Droṇa was decapitated on the 15th day of the war and Duśśāsana, Viṣasena and Karna were killed on the 17th day. Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa represents all these warriors as having met their death on the same day viz. the fifteenth.

Act vi—Yudhiṣṭhira's camp, situated at considerable distance from the battle-field, is the scene of the occurrences in this Act. As Draupadī and her maid are residing in this camp, it must have been at safe distance from the actual battle-field. This conclusion is confirmed by the fact that communication between Yudhiṣṭhira and people like Sahadeva and Kṛṣṇa, who are actually on the battle-

(1) Read :—

गान्धारी—जात यदि सत्यं जीवति मे वत्सस्तत्कथय कस्मिन् देशे वर्तते ।

संजयः—नन्वेव महाराज एक एव न्यग्रोधच्छायागमुपविष्टस्तिष्ठति ।

—Text p. 123



field, is maintained by means of couriers.<sup>(m)</sup> The camp of Yudhiṣṭhira was evidently pitched in a shady place and on the bank of the Sarasvatī. For, when the demon Cārvāka arrives there, the shade and the cool breeze appear to him to be sufficient to remove his fatigue.<sup>(n)</sup>

This Act records the deaths of Śalya, Śakuni and Duryodhana. According to the Mahābhārata these three events occurred on the eighteenth and last day of the war. As, according to our author, the events of the three previous Acts happened in the afternoon of the fifteenth day, two days must be supposed to have elapsed between the end of Act v and the beginning of Act vi.

As regards the actual hours of the action of this Act, they would appear to be 3 P. M. to 5 P. M. From the Mahābhārata we know that the last fight between Bhīmasena and Duryodhana took place in the afternoon of the 18th day. When the demon Cārvāka arrives at Yudhiṣṭhira's camp, he is feeling thirsty. The autumnal sun's heat is intense.<sup>(o)</sup> So 3 P. M. to 5 P. M. would not be unreasonable as the hours of the action of this Act.

It would then follow that the engagement between Yudhiṣṭhira and Śalya and that between Sahadeva and Śakuni took place in the morning. Yudhiṣṭhira then retired to his camp for rest and Bhīmasena, Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa began their search for Duryodhana.

(m) Note that Yudhiṣṭhira first sends his man Budhaka to convey to Sahadeva certain instructions about instituting search for Duryodhana. Secondly, Pañcālaka arrives at this camp with news from the battle-field at the command of Kṛṣṇa. Thirdly, Yudhiṣṭhira sends his chamberlain Jayandhara with his last message to Sahadeva.

(n) Note Cārvāka's words 'छाययेवानया सरस्वतीशिशिरस्तरङ्गसृष्ट्या मरुता चानेन विगतक्लमो मविष्यामि।' Act vi, p. 165

(o) Read Cārvāka's words 'अथ तु बलवच्चया शरदातपस्य' Act vi, p. 166

Another point to be noted in connection with the question of time is this. Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa represents the coronation of Yudhiṣṭhira as taking place immediately after the slaughter of Duryodhana. According to the Mahābhārata some time elapsed before this event took place. As Duryodhana lay on the battle-field in the throes of death, Āśvatthāman, Kṛpa and Kṛtavarman went to see him. Āśvatthāman severely censured the Pāṇḍavas in the presence of the dying monarch for their many iniquities. Duryodhana was pleased with this denunciation and appointed Āśvatthāman the last Commander-in-chief of his armies in order that he might carry on the work of revenge even after his death. Thus satisfied that the new commander of his armies, or whatever was left of them, would avenge the wrongs done to him, Duryodhana breathed his last.

During the night of that day, that is, the eighteenth day of the war, Āśvatthāman, with the help of Kṛpa and Kṛtavarman, performed a most dastardly and treacherous deed. He visited the Pāṇḍava camp clandestinely and killed Dhr̥ṣṭadyumna, Uttamaśujas, Yudhāmanyu, the five sons of Draupadī and Śikhaṇḍin, while they were asleep. In the confusion that was caused by this night-attack, soldiers running about unarmed in an attempt to escape from the camp, were done to death by Kṛpa and Kṛtavarman, who were standing at the entrance.

Yudhiṣṭhira and his brothers, who were encamping elsewhere, were shocked to learn this new disaster. Draupadī insisted that Āśvatthāman be immediately killed. Bhīmasena, her ever ready champion, and Nakula set out in pursuit of the Brāhmaṇa warrior. Kṛṣṇa, Yudhiṣṭhira and Arjuna followed them. Eventually they all succeeded in wresting from Āśvatthāman the precious jewel on his head as a token of subjugation. Draupadī was satisfied.



Then a fit of despondency, such as had overpowered Arjuna at the commencement of the war, came upon Yudhiṣṭhira. He refused to enter the city of Hastināpura to take advantage of the Pyrrhic victory that had been won, but desired to enter a forest. He was somehow prevailed upon to give up this idea and after offering obsequies to all his dead relatives, Yudhiṣṭhira made a triumphal entry into the capital. Then the coronation took place.

All these events, which happened between the overthrow of Duryodhana and the actual coronation, have been ignored by Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa, who represents the coronation as taking place immediately after the defeat and death of Duryodhana. And this was quite natural. For, these events had nothing to do with the Venīsaṁhāra which was Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's main theme.

## VII THE FIVE SANDHIS IN THE VENĪSAMHĀRA

In the preceding Section we saw that out of the three unities formulated by the ancient Greeks, the unities of time and place are unknown to Sanskrit dramaturgy. The doctrine of the unity of action, though not exactly in the sense in which it was understood in ancient Greece, is however developed in India. Unity of action is secured in a Sanskrit drama by the employment of what are known as the five sandhis or junctures of the action.

The development of the plot of a drama can be looked at from an objective as well as a subjective point of view. Objectively speaking, the plot of a drama has five elements which are known as arthaprakṛtis. Subjectively, the development of the action goes through five stages, known as avasthās, which represent the progressive attainment of the goal by the hero. The five elements of the plot combined with the five stages of the development of the action give rise to the five junctures.

The five arthaprakṛtis or elements of the plot are bīja, bindu, patākā, prakārī and kārya.<sup>(p)</sup> Bīja or the germ is the initial circumstance from which the action springs.<sup>(q)</sup> Bindu or the drop is constituted by the incident, which secures the continuity of the plot, when

(p) Read:—

बजिबिन्दुपताकाख्यप्रकरिकार्यलक्षणाः ।

अर्थप्रकृतयः पञ्च ता एताः परिकीर्तिताः ॥

—वशरूपक i. 18

(q) Read:—

अल्पमानं समुद्दिष्टं बहुधा यद्विस्तर्पति ॥ ६५

फलस्य प्रथमो हेतुर्बीजं तदभिधीयते ।

—साहित्यदर्पण vi



it appears to have been disturbed by the introduction of secondary matter. <sup>(r)</sup> It is so called, because, like a drop of oil on water, it spreads all round, covers apparently irrelevant events and brings them in line with the main theme. <sup>(s)</sup> Patākā or an episode is some incidental matter, which spreads over a considerable part of the drama and helps the principal action. <sup>(t)</sup> Prakārī or an episodical event is of the same nature as patākā, but of limited duration and secondary importance. <sup>(u)</sup> Kārya or the *dénouement* is the

(r) Note:—

प्रयोजनानां विच्छेदे यद्विच्छेदकारणम् ।  
यावत् समातिर्बन्धस्य स विन्दुः परिकीर्तितः ॥

—नाट्यशास्त्र xix. 22

अवान्तरार्थविच्छेदे विन्दुरच्छेदकारणम् ।

—दशरूपक i. 17; साहित्यदर्पण vi. 66

फले प्रधाने विच्छिन्ने दीजस्यावान्तरैः फलैः ।  
तस्याविच्छेदको हेतुर्विन्दुरित्याह कोहलः ॥

—भाष्यप्रकाश

(s) Vide 'अवान्तरकथाविच्छेदे तत्संधानकारी विन्दुः । जले तैलविन्दुवत् प्रसारित्वाद् विन्दुरिति व्यपदिश्यते ।'

(t) See:—

यद् वृत्तं हि परार्थं स्यात् प्रधानस्योपकारकम् ।  
प्रधानवच्च कल्प्येत सा पताकेति कीर्तिता ॥

—नाट्यशास्त्र xix. 23

व्यापि प्रासङ्गिकं वृत्तं पताकेत्यभिधीयते ।

—साहित्यदर्पण vi. 67

(u) Read:—

फलं प्रकल्प्यते यस्याः परार्थं केवलं बुधैः ।  
अनुबन्धविहीनं स्यात् प्रकरीमिति निर्दिशेत् ॥

—नाट्यशास्त्र xix. 24

प्रासङ्गिकं प्रदेशस्थं चरितं प्रकरी मता ॥

—साहित्यदर्पण vi. 68

शोभायै वैदिकादीनां यथा पुष्पाक्षतादयः ।  
अथर्तुवर्णनादिस्तु प्रसङ्गे प्रकरी भवेत् ॥

—भाष्यप्रकाशिका

end or object, which being achieved the drama 'comes to a close.'<sup>(v)</sup>

Kārya or the *dénouement* is reached by the action through the five avasthās or stages. They are ārambha, yatna, prāptyāśā, niyatāpti and phalāgama.<sup>(w)</sup> Ārambha or the beginning represents the eagerness for the achievement of the principal fruit, displayed by the hero or by some one else acting in his interest.<sup>(x)</sup> Yatna or the effort means determined activity for the attainment of the goal.<sup>(y)</sup> Prāptyāśā or the hope of achievement represents the stage where success is felt to be possible on a consideration of the means of achievement available and of the obstacles in its way.<sup>(z)</sup> Niyatāpti or certainty of achievement is the stage where success seems certain owing to the removal of obstacles.<sup>(a)</sup> Phalāgama or the attainment of the

(v) Note:—

यदाधिकारिकं कृतं सम्यक्प्राज्ञैः प्रयुज्यते ।  
तदर्थो यः समारम्भस्तत् कार्यं परिकीर्तितम् ॥

—नाट्यशास्त्र xix. 25

कार्यं निर्वाहकृत् फले ।

—प्रतापरुद्रयशोभूषण p. 107

(w) Vide:—

अवस्थाः पञ्च कार्यस्य प्रारम्भस्य फलार्थिभिः ।  
आरम्भयत्नप्राप्त्याशानिश्चयतात्तिलगमाः ॥

—दशरूपक i. 19

(x) Read:—

भवेदारम्भ औत्सुक्यं यन्मुख्यफलसिद्धये ।

—साहित्यदर्पण vi. 71

(y) See:—

प्रयत्नस्तु फलावाप्तौ व्यापारोऽतित्वरान्वितः ।

—साहित्यदर्पण vi. 72

(z) Note:—

उपायापायशङ्कान्यां प्राप्त्याशा प्राप्तिर्संभवः ।

—दशरूपक i. 21

(a) Read:—

अपायामावतः प्राप्तिर्नियतासिः सुनिश्चिता ।

—दशरूपक i. 21



fruit represents the accomplishment of the object in its entirety.<sup>(b)</sup>

We have seen above that the association of the five elements of the plot with the five stages of the action gives rise to the five sandhis or junctures.<sup>(c)</sup> These are mukha or opening, pratimukha or progression, garbha or development, vimarśa or avamarśa or pause and nirvahana or conclusion.<sup>(d)</sup> The mukha-sandhi arises from bīja and ārambha, the pratimukha from bindu and yatna, the garbha from patākā and prāptyāśā, the vimarśa from prakāśa and niyātāpti and the nirvahana from kārya and phalāgama. The Daśarūpaka and the Sāhityadarpaṇa definitely lay down that the junctures depend upon the elements and the stages. They however opine that this association should not be regarded as absolutely rigid. Thus according to the above arrangement patākā forms part of the garbha-sandhi. But if we observe existing dramas, we find that the episode often runs into vimarśa and even nirvahana.

We shall now proceed to describe briefly the five sandhis.

(b) Note:—

सावस्था फलयोगः स्याद्यः समयफलोदयः ।

—साहित्यदर्पण vi. 73

(c) Read:—

अर्थप्रकृतयः पञ्च पञ्चावस्थासमन्विताः ॥ 22

यथासंख्येन जायन्ते मुक्ताद्याः पञ्च संधयः ।...23

—दशरूपक i

यथासंख्यमवस्थाभिराभिर्योगाच्च पञ्चभिः ।

पञ्चधैवेतिवृत्तस्य भागाः स्युः पञ्च संधयः ॥

—साहित्यदर्पण vi. 74

(d) Note:—

मुखं प्रतिमुखं गर्भो विमर्शश्च तथैव हि ।

तथा निर्वहणं चेति नाटके पञ्च संधयः ॥

—नाट्यशास्त्र xix. 35

The mukha-sandhi sees the sowing of the seed of the action. In this there is a possibility of the development of various matters and sentiments. It is here that definite beginning of the action is made.<sup>(e)</sup>

The pratimukha marks the progress of the development of the seed. This progress is sometimes manifest and sometimes not quite so. The reason for the latter characteristic is that some secondary matter is here introduced and it obscures the development of the seed.<sup>(f)</sup>

The garbha contains, as its name suggests,<sup>(g)</sup> the final fruit in an embryonic form. The seed, which has been steadily growing during the course of the two preceding sandhis, is here seen and lost by turns and a search is made to find it out. Thus, though apparently the main action seems to have been retarded owing evidently to the introduction of the patākā or episode, in reality definite development towards the *dénouement* is here observed.<sup>(h)</sup>

(e) See :—

यत्र बीजसमुत्पत्तिर्नानार्थरससंभवा ॥ 76  
प्रारम्भेण समाशुक्ता तन्मुखं परिकीर्तितम् । ...77

—साहित्यदर्पण vi

(f) Vide :—

बीजस्योद्घाटने यत् दृष्टमिव क्वचित् ।  
मुखन्यस्तस्य सर्वत्र तद्वै प्रतिमुखं स्थितम् ॥

—नाट्यशास्त्र xix. 38

लक्ष्यालक्ष्यतयोद्भेदस्तस्य [ बीजस्य ] प्रतिमुखं भवेद् ।  
विन्दुप्रयत्नाजुगमाद् ... .. ॥ 30

—दशरूपक i

(g) Compare 'फलस्य गर्भीकरणाद् गर्भः' साहित्यदर्पण

(h) Read :—

उद्भेदस्तस्य बीजस्य प्राप्तिरप्राप्तिरेव वा ।  
पुनश्चान्वेषणं यत्र स गर्भ इति सांज्ञितः ॥

—नाट्यशास्त्र xix. 39

[Continued on the next page]



The vimarśa or avamarśa marks a pause in the progress of the action towards the *dénouement*. Here the action seems to have received a check or reversal on account of some obstacle which neither the hero nor the heroine nor any one else had either expected or even thought of. However, the obstacle is removed in the end and the achievement of the final goal becomes certain.<sup>(i)</sup>

The nirvāṇa witnesses the conclusion of the dramatic action. Here the poet brings together all the different threads of the narrative, which are scattered over the previous junctures, and makes them converge on the central

[ Continued from the preceding page ]

गर्भस्तु दृष्टनष्टस्य बीजस्यान्वेषणं मुहुः ।

द्वादशाङ्गः पताका स्यान्न वा स्यात् प्राक्सिंभवः ॥

—दशरूपक i. 36

फलप्रधानोपायस्य प्रादुर्भूतस्य किञ्चन ॥ 78

गर्भो यत्र समुद्भेदो ह्यासान्वेषणवान् मुहुः ।...79

—साहित्यदर्पण vi

From the above definition of the Daśarūpaka it will be noticed that patākā is not absolutely necessary for the garbha-sandhi. Prāptyaśā must of course be there. Says the Daśarūpaka on the above definition 'तत्र चोत्सर्गिकत्वेन प्रावायाः पताकाया अनियमं दर्शयति "पताका स्यान्न वा" इत्यनेन । प्राक्सिंभवस्तु स्यादेवेति दर्शयति "स्यात्" इति ।'

(i) Note:—

गर्भाभिर्भिजबीजार्थो विलोमनकृतोऽपि वा ।

क्रोधव्यसनजो वापि स विमर्श इति स्पष्टः

—नाट्यशास्त्र xix. 40

क्रोधेनावसृशेद्यत्र व्यसनाद्वा विलोमनात् ।

गर्भनिर्भिजबीजार्थः सोऽवमर्श इति स्पष्टः ॥

—दशरूपक i. 43

यत्र मुख्यफलोपाय उद्भिन्नो गर्भतोऽधिकः ॥ 79

ज्ञापार्थैः सान्तरायश्च स विमर्श इति स्पष्टः । .....80

—साहित्यदर्पण vi

theme. The purpose with which the drama began is served and the fruit is gained.<sup>(j)</sup>

Such, in short, is the general nature of the five sandhis, which are intended to secure unity of action in a drama. The theory of junctures sounds very well on paper. It is evidently intended to apply to dramas of five acts, which represent the norm. In actual practice, however, it is always possible to discover the existence of these five sandhis even in a drama, which evidently lacks unity of action. The Venīsamhāra, for instance, in our opinion at any rate, does not contain unity of action. It seems to have been made of scenes and acts, which are but loosely strung together. Yet it is not impossible to show that the five junctures with their main constituents are present here. We now proceed actually to do this.

The mukha-sandhi, which arises from the combination of bija and ārambha, covers the first Act of the Venīsamhāra. The bija or seed is here seen in Yudhiṣṭhira's readiness to commence hostilities<sup>(k)</sup> on the failure of Kṛṣṇa's mission of

(j) Vide :—

समानयनमर्थानां मुखाद्यानां सत्रीजिनाम् ।  
नानामाघोन्तराणां यद्भवेज्जिर्वहणं तु तत् ॥

—नाट्यशास्त्र xix. 41

बीजवन्तो मुखाद्यर्था विप्रकीर्णा यथायथम् ॥ 48  
एकार्थसुपनीयन्ते यत्र निर्वहणं हि तत् । .....49

—दशरूपक i

The Sāhityadarpaṇa gives the same definition as that of the Daśarūpaka, but instead of एकार्थम् it reads एकार्थम्.

मुखसन्ध्यादयो यत्र विकीर्णा बीजसंयुताः ।  
महाप्रयोजनं यान्ति तच्चिर्वहणमुच्यते ॥

—सुभाकर

(k) Compare 'यथा च वेणीसंहारे द्रौपदीकेशतंयननेतुर्भीमक्रोधोपचितयुधिष्ठिरे' त्साहो बीजमिति' दशरूपक under i. 17a.



peace, as found in i. 24. <sup>(u)</sup> The ārambha of course is represented by Bhīmasena's eagerness to fulfil his vow that is observed throughout this Act.

The pratimukha-sandhi is found in the second Act. It comprises bindu and yatna. The bindu is constituted by the entrance of Jayadratha's mother and Duśśalā on p. 49 (text). All that precedes viz. the scenes in which Bhānumatī and her companions and Duryodhana and his charioteer take part, is clearly secondary matter and disturbs the continuity of the main action. It is only when Jayadratha's mother and Duśśalā arrive on the stage that we become aware of events occurring outside the Bāloḍyāna. Their entrance thus secures the disturbed continuity of the main action and constitutes the bindu. Yatna is represented by the speeches of Jayadratha's mother on pp. 50-51, in which she describes the efforts of the Pāṇḍavas, and especially of Arjuna, to bring about the death of Jayadratha. The second Act thus contains the pratimukha-sandhi. <sup>(m)</sup>

The garbha-sandhi, which is made of patākā and prā-ptyāśā, covers Acts iii and iv. Āśvatthāman's grief and lamentations at the death of his father, his quarrel with Karna and his new vow, are incidental matters and constitute the patākā. Sundaraka's soliloquy and his long descriptions of the various fights, which do not much

(l) This stanza runs as follows :—

यत् सत्यव्रतमङ्गभीरुमनसा यत्नेन मन्दीकृतं  
यद्विस्मर्तुमपीहितं शमवता शान्तिं कुलस्येच्छता ।  
तद् द्यूतारोपि संभृतं नृपसुताकेशान्त्रराकर्षणेः  
क्रोधज्योतिरिदं महत् कुरुवने यौधिष्ठिरं जृम्भत ॥

(m) Read 'वेणीसंहारेऽपि द्वितीयोऽङ्के भीष्मादिवधेन किञ्चिदक्षयस्य कर्णायवधाच्चा-  
लक्ष्यस्य क्रोधबीजस्योद्भेदः । "सहस्रत्यगण सवान्ववद्" (ii 6) इत्यादिभिः  
"दुःशासनस्य हृदयक्षतजाम्बुपाने" (ii 28) इत्येवमादिभिश्चोद्भेदः प्रतिमुखसन्धि-  
रिति ।' दशरूपक under i. 30

help the progress of the main action, may also be included under the *patākā*. *Prāptyāśā* is represented by Bhīmasena's speech from behind the curtain on pp. 88-89, wherein he announces his intention of butchering Duśśāsana, who has fallen in his clutches, and by the speeches of Aśvatthāman on pp. 90-91, in which the drinking of Duśśāsana's blood by Bhīmasena is referred to. Stanzas 2, 3, 4, and 9 of Act iv may also represent *prāptyāśā* in so far as they shadow forth the death of Duryodhana.<sup>(n)</sup>

The *vimarśa-sandhi* covers the fifth Act and a large part of the sixth as well.<sup>(o)</sup> It arises from the combination of *prakarī* and *niyatāpti*. The *prakarī* is represented by Dhṛtarāṣṭra's attempt to bring about peace, which seems to check the final attainment of the goal by the hero. The doings of Cārvāka in the sixth Act also partake of the nature of episodical event and may well be styled *prakarī*. The disappearance of Duryodhana, consequent on the new vow of Bhīmasena, is a pertinent part of the *vimarśa-sandhi*, because it definitely jeopardizes the fulfilment of Bhīmasena's vow and forms an obstacle in the way of the attainment of the final goal. *Niyatāpti* or certainty of achievement is seen in the report of Pāṇcālaka on p. 152 that

- (n) With reference to the *garbha-sandhi*, in which *patākā* figures, it may be noted that the *Sūhityadarpaṇa* regards the doings of Bhīmasena in the *Venīsaṃhāra* as constituting the *patākā*. This is evidently due to the fact that Viśvanātha considers Yudhiṣṭhira the hero of the drama. Read 'व्यापि प्रासङ्गिकं वृत्तं पताकेत्यभिधीयते । यथा रामचरिते सुग्रीवादेः । वेण्यां भीमादेः, शाकुन्तले विदूषकस्य चरितम् ।' साहित्यदर्पण vi, p. 280 (निर्णयसागर)

- (o) Note 'यथा च वेणीसंहारे इर्योधनरुधिराक्तभीमसेनागमपर्यन्तः [विमर्शः] । "तीर्णे भीष्ममहोदधी.....' vi. 1 इत्यत्र स्वल्पावज्ञेये जये इत्यादिभिर्विजयप्रत्यर्थि-समस्तभीष्मादिमहारथवधादवधारितैकान्ताविजयावमर्शनादवमर्शनं . दर्शितमित्यवमर्श-सन्धिः ।' दशरूपक on i. 43



Duryodhana is found. Lord Kṛṣṇa's message to Yudhiṣṭhira (p. 160) that festivities may be commenced in expectation of Bhīmasena's victory over Duryodhana also embodies *niyatāpti*.

The last sandhi *nirvahana* is marked by the conclusion of the dramatic action. It arises from the combination of *kārya* and *phalāgama*. The *kārya* in the present drama is the killing of Duryodhana. Act vi 37, wherein Bhīmasena announces that he has crossed the vast ocean of his great vow, embodies the *kārya*. The *phalāgama* is the binding of Draupadi's mass of hair referred to in vi. 42. The *nirvahana-sandhi* thus extends from vi. 37 to the end of the drama. Its central point is the recognition of Bhīmasena by the chamberlain,—Bhīmasena, who on his entrance, is, owing to the false story of Cārvāka, mistaken by them all to be the victorious Duryodhana.<sup>(p)</sup>

(p) Read 'यथा वेणीसंहारे—“कञ्चुकी—(उपसृत्य सहर्षम्) महाराज, वर्धसे । अयं स्वत्वायुष्मान् मीमसेनः ह्ययोधनक्षतजारुणीकृतसफलशरीरोऽर्लक्ष्यव्यक्तिः । अलमधुना संदेहेन ।” इत्यादिना प्रौढीकृतसंयमनादिमुत्तसन्ध्यादिबीजानां निज-निजस्थानोपक्षिप्तानामेकार्थतया योजनम् ।' दशरूपक on i. 48b-49a wherein *nirvahana-sandhi* is defined.

## VIII BHATTA NARĀYAṆA AS A DRAMATIST

In the galaxy of Sanskrit dramatists Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa is a star of the second magnitude only. Beside the dazzling brilliance of Kālidāsa, Bhavabhūti and Śrīharṣa, his light fades dim. Yet the Veṇīsaṃhāra enjoys a popularity, which is surpassed only by the Śākuntala and the Uttararāmacarita. This is due more to the dature of the plot of the drama than to its intrinsic merits. The story of the national epic was already popular. When the poet infused new life into it by dramatising it and thus made it even more realistic, it was bound to captivate the people. And the Veṇīsaṃhāra captivated the people so much that the ordinary man learnt his epic story more from this play than from the epic itself. One proof of the popularity of the Veṇīsaṃhāra is furnished by the fact that, in company with the Ratnāvalī of Śrīharṣa it is most drawn upon by writers on dramaturgy to illustrate the various topics in their science. Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa also exercised considerable influence on succeeding dramatists. The Bālarāmāyaṇa of Rājasekhara (900 A. D.) and the Caṇḍakaūsika of Kṣemiśvara (900 A. D.) show clear traces of the influence of the Veṇīsaṃhāra.

As observed before, Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa excels in the delineation of pathos. That sentiment in fact forms his special province. In some places his pathos rises to the level of Bhavabhūti's. Aśvatthāman in the first half of the third Act, Duryodhana in the fourth and the fifth and Yudhiṣṭhira and Draupadī in the sixth represent his chief pathetic figures. The poet was also proficient in portraying individual characters. From this point of view Duryodhana and Bhānumatī have received the poet's best attention. On



them he has lavished all his skill. The picture of Bhānumatī is confined to the second Act, but the portrayal of Duryodhana's character is continued all through the following Acts. The robust violent Bhīmasena, who chafes at the authority of his elder brother at every step, but does not really wish to break loose from it in spite of his utterance to the contrary, the hot fiery-tempered Aśvatthāman with his intense filial affection and fine sportsman-like spirit, the cunning crooked Karna with his meanness and self-conceit, the old dotting Dhṛtarāṣṭra with his unscrupulousness and blind parental affection—all these have been skilfully painted. The devoted faithful Buddhimatikā and the old garrulous Vinayandhara have also received due attention from the poet.

Proficiency in delineating sentiments and in portraying brilliant character-sketches, though a valuable endowment in itself no doubt, does not alone contribute to the poet's success as a dramatist. He must possess the art of dramatic construction. The various scenes that he paints must be so woven together that they gradually lead to the *dénouement* and create the impression of a consistent whole. Considered from this point of view Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa is a failure. Though a great poet, he is not a dramatic artist. The *Veṅṛsaṃhāra* constitutes a series of brilliant scenes, which, though so beautiful and impressive from the point of view of characterisation and the development of sentiment, are loosely strung together and thus fail in creating the impression of a well constructed drama. It may be that the nature of the plot of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's play, namely, the story of the epic running over such great length, rather than an intrinsic defect in his genius, is responsible for this. But there is no denying the fact that the *Veṅṛsaṃhāra* is an inartistically constructed drama. This will be clear from the following brief survey of the six Acts from the point of view of construction.



The first Act is highly successful. The seed is here well sown. But the two next Acts, though so successful in themselves, have hardly any relevancy as constituent parts of the drama Venīsamhāra. In fact, while we enjoy the delightful love-scene between Duryodhana and Bhānumati, sympathise with Aśvattāman in his pathetic lamentations and observe with interest his quarrel with Karna, we are scarcely aware that we are reading a drama wherein the tying of Draupadi's hair is the principal topic. Only towards the close of these Acts does the poet tell us something of the progress of the war, whose conclusion is to lead to the Venīsamhāra, by referring to the vow of Arjuna to kill Jayadratha and by making Bhīmasena declare from behind the curtain his intention of butchering Duśśāsana, who has fallen in his clutches. These devices appear to represent the author's conscious efforts to link the two more or less detached Acts to the main theme. The fourth Act is mainly narrative and we hardly know that we are reading a drama when we listen to Sundaraka's long descriptions. Even as a Viṣkambhaka it is a failure, for here information is deliberately thrust on us. No poet who knew anything of what dramatic construction meant would have composed such an Act. The fifth Act, though full of action, is not faultless in its construction, for its scenes do not logically follow one another and have no definite dramatic purpose to serve. The sixth Act suffers from the abrupt character of its commencement and from the fact that its first scene is made to serve the purpose of a Viṣkambhaka. It will thus be seen that from the point of view of dramatic construction, the Venīsamhāra leaves much to be desired.

Another defect of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's genius is that he lacks sense of proportion. We have already seen how this defect leads the poet to assign to Duryodhana more



importance and to elaborate his character with greater care than he gives to his hero Bhīmasena. The same is true in the case of the heroine also. Draupadī is the heroine no doubt. But she does not receive from the poet half the attention and care that he bestows on Bhānumatī. Bhānumatī's presence, it is true, is not felt outside the second Act, but in that Act she absorbs our mind as Draupadī nowhere does. The same deficiency in sense of proportion is at the bottom of the poet's failure to recognise the proper limitations of the narrative element in a drama. That is how he comes to give us such an Act as the fourth. Similarly, want of the sense of proportion is displayed in the character of Sundaraka's speeches. How is it that a common soldier, who is not cultured enough to be able to speak in Sanskrit, gives us such an elaborate metaphor as that occurring at the end of his preliminary speech and indulges in such high-flown descriptions of the battle-scenes? It is true this particular anomaly is found in other dramatists as well, notably in Bhavabhūti, but that does not lessen its anomalous or disproportionate character.

But then one feature which cannot fail to strike a careful reader of the *Veṇīsaṃhāra* is that the author shows himself to be quite familiar with the stage-craft. The various scenes composing his drama have been arranged with a definite eye to their representation on the stage and the exits and entrances of different characters have been skilfully managed. Situations sometimes arise during the course of the drama when some characters already on the stage have apparently to remain idle thereon, while characters entering anew go through their conversation or soliloquies. On such occasions Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa always devises some means of keeping these apparently unoccupied characters engrossed in something so as to avoid the picture of some characters standing listlessly on the stage.



Three specific instances of such situations may be noted. In Act i when the dialogue between Draupadī and her maid, which forms the second scene of the Act (text pp. 11-13), is held, Bhīmasena and Sahadeva, who are already on the stage, will, it appears, have to remain there quite unoccupied during the time. But as we saw before<sup>(q)</sup> the poet makes Bhīmasena turn his face away in anger and Sahadeva stands looking at him, wondering what he would say or do next. Then in the third Act during the time required by Kṛpā to go through his soliloquy (text pp. 67-68), Aśvatthāman, who is already on the stage, is represented as being in a swoon and the charioteer as engaged in restoring him to consciousness.<sup>(r)</sup> Thirdly, during the long soliloquy of Sundaraka in Act iv (text pp. 99-103), Duryodhana, who is already on the stage, is represented as being in a mood of extreme despondency and consequently sits in his chariot with his head hanging down, while his charioteer looks at him with great concern.<sup>(s)</sup> While Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa thus displays close acquaintance with stage-craft, it seems surprising how the fact that the fourth Act would not be successful on the stage did not strike him.

Lastly we want to say a few words about Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's attitude towards nature. It must here be noted that the places where the poet describes nature in the Venīsamhāra are not many. First we have a description of the autumnal phenomena in the Prastāvanā on p. 4. This description strikes us as purely conventional. Then the early morning phenomena are described in the second Act on pp. 30-31. There is no doubt here the poet seems to have observed nature at first hand and the description appears

(q) See p. 36 above.

(r) Vide p. 57 above.

(s) Read p. 144 of Notes to our edition of the Venīsamhāra.



realistic. Further in the same Act on pp. 44-45 we have a description of the violent wind. It is no doubt a poetic description, but seems to have been composed by the exercise of the imagination rather than by actual observation. Besides it is inappropriate on the present occasion. (See p. 105 of Notes) Later on in Act iv on p. 94 we get a description of the Nyagrodha tree on the bank of a lake and in Act vi on pp. 156 and 157 we have a description of the lake agitated by Bhīmasena. In both these there is nothing very striking.

From the above survey of nature as it figures in the *Veṇīśamhāra* it cannot be said that Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa possessed any very great love for nature. His attitude towards nature was of the conventional type and there was nothing very distinguishing about it.

## IX BHATTA NĀRĀYAṆA'S LITERARY STYLE

Literary style is in Sanskrit known as *riti* and is defined as a particular arrangement of words intended to help the development of sentiments.<sup>(i)</sup> From very early times different kinds of style were prevalent, but as Daṇḍin remarks only two of these can sharply be distinguished viz. Vaidarbhī and Gaudī.<sup>(u)</sup> Bhāmaha (i. 31-32) also mentions the same two. Vāmana and Rājasekhara give three kinds of style,<sup>(v)</sup> adding Pāñcālī to the two admitted by Bhāmaha and Daṇḍin. The Agnipurāṇa (adhyaṃya 340), Rudraṭa in his Kāvyaśālikā (ii. 4 and 6) and Viśvanātha in his Sāhityadarpaṇa<sup>(w)</sup> speak of four kinds, mentioning Lāṭikā as the fourth. Bhoja in his Sarasvatikanṭhābharṇa enu-

(i) Read:—

(1) 'विशिष्टा पदरचना रीतिः' वामन's काव्यालंकारसूत्र i. 2. 7

(2) 'वचनविन्यासक्रमो रीतिः' राजशेखर's काव्यमीमांसा p. 9

(3) 'पदसंघटना रीतिरङ्गसंस्थाविशेषवत् ।

उपकर्त्री रसादीनाम् ...॥

साहित्यदर्पण ix. 1

(u) Vide:—

अस्त्यनेको गिरां मार्गः सुहृमभेदः परस्परम् ।

तत्र वेदभ्रंशौघादौ वर्ण्यते प्रस्फुटान्तरो ॥

—काव्यादर्श i. 40

(v) See:—

(1) 'सा त्रिधा वेदभीं गौडीया पाञ्चाली च' काव्यालंकारसूत्र 1. 2. 9

(2) 'रीतयस्तु तिलः' काव्यमीमांसा p. 10

(w) Note:—

सा [रीतिः] पुनः स्याच्चतुर्विधा ॥ 1

वेदभीं चाथ गौडी च पाञ्चाली लाटिका तथा ।...2

—साहित्यदर्पण ix



merates six, which are Vaidarbhī, Pāñcālī, Gaudīyā, Āvāntikā, Lāṭiyā and Māgadhī.<sup>(x)</sup>

The number of the kinds of literary style thus varies from two to six. Of these only two deserve special notice viz. Vaidarbhī and Gaudī. The principal characteristics of the Vaidarbhī style are graceful arrangement of words characterised by sweet syllables and absence of long compounds. Compositions in Vaidarbhī style create the same pleasure as the notes of a lute.<sup>(y)</sup> It is generally regarded as the best of styles.<sup>(z)</sup> The Gaudī style on the other hand

(x) Read:—

वेदर्भादिभूतः पन्था काव्ये मार्ग इति स्मृतः ।  
रीड् गताविति धातोः सा व्युत्पत्त्या रीतिरुच्यते ॥ 27  
वेदर्भी साथ पाञ्चाली गौडीयावन्तिका तथा ।  
लाटीया मागधी चेति षोढा रीतिर्निगद्यते ॥ 28

—सरस्वतीकण्ठाभरण ii

(y) Note:—

(1) श्लेषः वसदः समता माधुर्यं सुकुमारता ।  
अर्थव्यक्तिरुदारत्वमोजःकान्तिसमाधयः ॥ 41  
इति वेदर्भमार्गस्य भाषा दश गुणाः स्मृताः ।  
एषां विपर्ययः भाषो लक्ष्यते गौडवर्त्मनि ॥ 42

—काव्यादर्श i

(2) अस्पृष्टा दोषमात्राभिः समयगुणशुक्लिता  
विपञ्चीस्वरसौभाग्या वेदर्भी रीतिरिष्यते ॥ 21

—under काव्यालंकारसूत्र i. 2. 11

(3) तत्रासमासा निःशेषश्लेषादिगुणशुक्लिता ।  
विपञ्चीस्वरसौभाग्या वेदर्भी रीतिरिष्यते ॥ 21

—सरस्वतीकण्ठाभरण ii

(4) माधुर्यव्यञ्जकैर्वर्णै रचना ललितात्मिका ॥ 2  
अद्वित्तिरूपवृत्तिर्वा वेदर्भी रीतिरिष्यते । ...3

—साहित्यदर्पण ix

(z) Bilhana in his Vikramāṅkadevacarita (i. 9) praises the Vaidarbhī style in the following stanza:—

अनघ्रद्विष्टः श्रवणाद्यतस्य सरस्वतीधिभ्रमजन्मभूमिः ।  
वेदर्भरीतिः कृतिनामुदेति सौभाग्यलाम्रप्रतिधुः पदानाम् ॥

possesses ojas or force or vigour as its main characteristic. This force is brought out by pompous arrangement of words and by the use of long compounds and high-sounding expressions.<sup>(a)</sup>

As Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa was a Gauda, it was natural that his drama should exhibit characteristics of the Gaudī style more than those of any other. But he does not write in this style alone. No poet in fact can confine himself entirely to only one kind of style. Some of the good points of the Vaidarbhī style are also found in the Venīsamhāra.

Having made these general observations on style, we shall now proceed to point out the special characteristics of the literary style of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa. The first characteristic then that strikes us is the force with which the poet writes. Whatever may be his meaning, he conveys it home to us with great force. He appears to express himself with strokes of hammer as it were. His style is, as Wilson happily says, 'rather powerful than polished.'<sup>(aa)</sup> This is seen

(a) See:—

- (1) ओजःकान्तिमती गौडीया ॥ १२ ॥ ओजश्च कान्तिश्च विद्येते यस्यां सा  
ओजःकान्तिमती गौडीया नाम रीतिः । माधुर्यसौकुमार्ययोरनावात् ।  
समासबहुला अत्युल्लवणपदा च । अत्र श्लोकः—

समस्तास्तुक्कटपदामोजःकान्तिगुणान्विताम् ।

गौडीयामिति गायन्ति रीतिं रीतिविचक्षणाः ॥

—काव्यालंकारसूत्र i. 2

- (2) ओजःप्रकाशकैर्वर्णैर्वन्धआढम्बरः\* पुनः ॥ 3

समासबहुला गौडी

—साहित्यदर्पण ix

\* Pompous, showy, magnificent.

- (3) बहुतरसमासयुक्ता सुमहाभाषाक्षरा च गौडीया ।

रीतिरनुप्रासमहिमपरतन्त्रा स्तोत्रवाक्या च ॥

—quoted under साहित्यदर्पण ix. 3

(aa) Vide Select Specimens of the Theatre of the Hindus  
Vol II, p. 343.



especially in the passages that develop the heroic sentiment. Many of the stanzas of Bhīmasena are good examples of the force of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's style and of Gauḍī style generally.<sup>(b)</sup> But even in pathetic passages this force makes its presence felt and renders the pathos more powerful and impressive. This characteristic of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's style makes it an excellent vehicle of what Wilson has called 'the poetry of passion,' with which the drama is full.

Another peculiarity of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's style is that he knew the art of making the sound an echo of the sense. Two expedients are generally practised for doing this viz. the use of appropriate-sounding words and the employment of appropriate metres. Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa resorts to both these. Thus the stanza i. 21 (Cañcadbhujabhramita etc.) with its harsh-sounding syllables is well calculated to bring out the heroic sentiment that inspires Bhīmasena. The following stanza i. 22 (Manthāyastārṇavāmbhaḥ etc.) is again so worded that as it is uttered we feel the sensation of a drum sounding. Similarly, Aśvatthāman's stanza iii. 4 (Mahāpralayamāruta etc.) definitely gives us the impression of a loud noise even by means of its sound. As regards the employment of appropriate metres the best example appears to us to be ii. 21 (Kuru ghanoru padāni etc.), where the Drutavilambita so clearly suggests the action of some one leading another slowly and slowly. The Mandākrāntā in iv. 15 (Adyaivāvaṁ raṇamupagatau etc.) is best suited to bring out the pathos of Duryodhana's condition and the Hariṇī in vi. 24 (Mama hi vayasā etc.) brings out the affectionate attitude of ardent and sincere imploration of Yudhiṣṭhira as no other metre would have done. The

- (b) Stanza i. 21 has actually been quoted by the Sāhityadarpaṇa as an illustration of Gauḍī-rīti. Other stanzas falling under the same category are i. 22, 27; ii. 19; iii. 4 and v. 35.

Praharṣiṇī along with the appropriate-sounding words in ii. 29 (Udghātakvaṇita etc.) well brings out the idea of a chariot moving on uneven ground and producing the jingling of bells at every jolt. Other examples of these two expedients may easily be found by a reader who has carefully studied and appreciated the drama.

The third peculiarity of the poet's style is the ease with which most of his stanzas are understood. Prasāda or perspicuity, the quality which makes the reader understand the meaning of a stanza even as it is read, is found in most of the stanzas in the Veṇīsaṃhāra. Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa was also fond of jingling assonances of sounds and often resorts to alliteration and rhyme in order to produce that effect.<sup>(c)</sup> But sometimes he is much too carried away by this fondness and uses expressions which appear distinctly to have been used for rhyme only.<sup>(d)</sup> Balanced construction, sometimes based upon contrast, is also met with.<sup>(e)</sup>

A further notable peculiarity of which the poet appears to be especially fond is the employment of kaku or the question of appeal. This device is intended to give emphasis and force to the statement concerned and has been used by Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa quite a number of times in his drama. In the very first Act it occurs no less than thirteen times. No other poet to our knowledge uses kaku so often as Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa.

(c) See for example 'अयि कर्ण कर्णसुखदा...गिरसुहिरत्...। अकृताप्रियं प्रियं वृषसेनवत्सल विहाय यासि...।' v. 14; 'कृष्णा केशेषु कृष्टा...कोषवह्नी कृशशलभ-कुलावज्ञया...।' v. 29; 'पीनाभ्यां मद्भुजाभ्यां भ्रमितयुग्मदा...अनुभविता भूषणं भीममस्मि' v. 35; 'कर्णेन कर्णसुखम्' v. 38; 'प्रिये प्रायस्तस्य' vi. 5; 'एतज्जलं जलजनीलविलोचनाय भीमाय मोः' vi. 30.

(d) Notice 'अविनयनोर्कर्णधार कर्ण' p. 114 and 'आक्रान्तपरशुरामाभिरामयज्ञाः' p. 145 and see our notes on these expressions.

(e) Vide ii. 2, 11 and 23; iii. 44 and v. 21.



Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa uses a large number of rhetoric figures to embellish his style. Thus Ullekha (i. 3), Paramparita-rūpaka (i. 4; iii. 23cd), <sup>(f)</sup> Upamā (i. 5 and 14), Śleṣa (i. 6 and 7), mixture of Upamā and Rūpaka (i. 19), Samastavastuviṣaya Sāṅga Rūpaka (i. 25), <sup>(g)</sup> Upamā and Samāsokti (ii. 8), Virodha (ii. 11), Gamyotprekṣā (ii. 13), Rūpaka and Upamā (ii. 19), Kāvyaśiṅga and Apahnuṭi (ii. 20), Vibhāvanā or Nidarśanā (iii. 8), Paryāyokta (iii. 42), <sup>(h)</sup> Sahokti (v. 36), Rūpaka (vi. 1), Dīpaka (vi. 12), Atiśayokti (vi. 26) and Arthāpatti (vi. 43) are some of the figures that easily occur to one's mind. Parikara, which consists in the employment of significant words, seems to be the poet's favourite; for it is often met with. <sup>(i)</sup> Some of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's Arthāntaranyāsas are extremely beautiful. <sup>(j)</sup> The poet also has enriched the language with

(f) Paramparita-rūpaka is also found in the three vocatives of the sun on p. 41 viz. अम्बरमहासरपकसहस्रपत्र, पूर्वदिशावधूमखमण्डल कुङ्कुमविशेषक and सकलधुवनान्नदीपक.

(g) Another notable example of समस्तवस्तुविषय साङ्ग रूपक is supplied by Sundaraka's sentence on p. 102 beginning with 'तस्य खल्विदं निर्भस्मितविदुरवचनबीजस्य'.

(h) Another good example of पर्यायोक्त is Buddhimatikā's speech 'अवि भातुमति, युष्माकममुक्तेषु केशहस्तेषु कथमस्माकं देव्याः केशाः संयन्ते ।' p. 18.

(i) Note Aśvatthāman's words to Karna on p. 89, which are all significant, viz., 'अङ्गराज, सेनापते, जामदग्न्याशिष्य, द्रोणोपहासित्, युजबलपरिरक्षितसकललोक'. Bhīmasena's speech from behind the curtain on p. 93 is also full of significant words. Similarly, Bhīmasena's description of Duryodhana in v. 26 is again couched in significant expressions.

(j) See especially i. 20; ii. 3 and the following line; vi. 9.

some quotable lines and phrases of 'general application, (<sup>k</sup>) of which even Kālidāsa might well be proud.

Turning now to the points of weakness of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa as a literary artist, we first note that he does not seem to be always at ease when writing. The poet does not seem to wield a facile pen everywhere. Many a time his constructions are artificial and laboured and in some places they become involved. A distinct tendency to verbosity is seen in many places. Clumsy and awkward expressions are often found and ill-formed compounds are sometimes met with.<sup>(l)</sup> A fondness for the unnecessary use of the preposition *prati* is also noticeable.<sup>(m)</sup>

Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa lived in an age when Daṇḍin's dictum that *ojas* or profuseness of compounds formed the

(<sup>k</sup>) All *subhāsitas* in the drama are collected in Appendix—C to our edition of the *Venīsamhāra*. The following will perhaps bear repetition here :

- (1) अगुलङ्घनीयः सदाचारः ।
- (2) अहो मृग्यत्वमवलानां नाम ।
- (3) आशा बलवती राजन् ।
- (4) दैवायत्तं कुले जन्म ।
- (5) वक्तुं सुकरं दुष्करमध्यवसितुम् ।
- (6) स्वपञ्च जनः किं न खलु प्रेक्षते ।

(<sup>l</sup>) As an example of clumsy expression we may quote 'तदादेश्य तमुदेशं यत्रस्था मातुमती' p. 30, where *यत्रस्था* should really be *यत्र तिष्ठति*. सापेक्ष compounds, involving awkward एकदेशी अन्वय, are sometimes found. Vide ii. 22 and vi. 8 and our notes thereon. 'मादृशे भृत्यवर्गे' p. 155 is a glaring instance of an unjustifiable एकदेशी अन्वय. For, it will be noticed मादृश goes only with *भृत्य* in the compound *भृत्यवर्गे*.

(<sup>m</sup>) Note 'शिविरं प्रति प्रस्थातुकामस्य' p. 2, 'चतुःशालकं प्रति प्रस्थितः' p. 5. and 'सुरोपसं प्रति प्रस्थितः' p. 6.



essence of prose <sup>(n)</sup> prevailed. Consequently he tried to use as many big compounds as possible, especially in the prose passages, in order to make them vigorous or powerful. But the poet apparently did not realise that this dictum had limitations, especially in a drama, which pretended to be realistic. Consequently his prose, with its long compounds, looks unnatural. Bhavabhūti was of course a much greater sinner in this respect than our poet.

Then again in the *Veṇīsaṃhāra* we have evidence of the poet's careless writing in many places.<sup>(o)</sup> Rules of

(n) Read :—

ओजः समासश्चयस्त्वमेतद्द्रव्यस्य जीवितम् ।  
पथेऽप्यदाक्षिणात्यानामिदमेकं परायणम् ॥

—काव्यादर्श i. 80

(o) Instances of these have been duly pointed out in the Notes. Attention may here be drawn to a few cases. In ii. 10 and iii. 29 Duryodhana begins by referring to himself in the plural and then speaks of himself in the singular in the same stanzas. In ii. 22 Duryodhana speaks of Bhīṣmamatī in the third person as 'अस्याः युगाक्ष्याः', but in the sentence which just precedes this stanza he has addressed her as 'भवति'. A most glaring instance of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's careless and confused style is supplied by iii. 24 and the prose passage that precedes it.—As examples of careless expressions we may note 'मन्थनपाण्डवः' (p. 115) in the sense of Bhīmasena, 'तृतीयस्तेऽनुजः' (p. 170) in the sense of Arjuna with reference to Yudhiṣṭhira and the expressions 'भ्रातृशत' (iii 17) and 'भुतशत' (v. 3) in the sense of 99 Kauravas.—Tautologous expressions like 'अन्यस्मिन्नपि जन्मान्तरे' p. 102 and 'कर्णाक्षी-विषमोगिनि' vi. 1 must also be put down to the poet's careless writing.

grammar, both in the matter of the formation of words and of syntax, are found to be violated on some occasions.<sup>(p)</sup>

There is nothing very striking in Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's vocabulary and selection of words. He had no *penchant* for difficult and out-of-the-way words, such as Bhavabhūti had. In this he resembles Kālidāsa who, though using a large number of words, hardly, if ever, employs a word of unusual occurrence when a simpler one is available.

- (p) For Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's violence of grammar see above foot-note (s) p. 16. Also note 'तदलमेव प्रकृतिमुकुमारमात्मानं ज्ञेदयितुम्' p. 42, where the infinitive 'ज्ञेदयितुम्' is ungrammatical for the grammatically correct gerund 'ज्ञेदयित्वा'. Similarly in 'अलमत्यर्थमात्मानं शोकानले प्रक्षेप्तुम्' p. 79, 'प्रक्षेप्तुम्' should be 'प्रक्षिप्य.' 'अरातिल्लवधुषः' (ii. 2), 'मृतज' (ii. 21) and 'आच-धनुषास्' (iii. 21) are also inaccurate from the strict grammatical point of view. The infinitive 'अध्यवसितुम्' in the famous 'वक्तुं सुकरं दुष्करमध्यवसितुम्' is a grammatical blunder. The correct form is अध्यवसातुम्. The word संग्र has been used in the neuter in v. 21, though it is masculine. The compound मन्त्रसिद्ध in v. 9 is grammatically incorrect.



## X BHATTA NĀRĀYAṆA AND BHAVABHŪTI

In determining the date of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa we remarked above (p. 18) that the style and general construction of the *Veṇīśaṁhāra* show that Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa belonged to the age of Bhavabhūti. In this Section we desire to indicate the points of similarity and contrast between these two poets.

First then both Bhavabhūti and Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa are proficient in the delineation of pathos. Against the strict rule of dramaturgy, which says that either the love or the heroic sentiment should be principal in a drama,<sup>(a)</sup> Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa has made *karuṇa* or pathos the prevailing sentiment in his *Veṇīśaṁhāra*. Bhavabhūti has done the same in his *Uttararāmacarita*, where also the principal sentiment is *karuṇa*. Both of them show skill in the delineation of other sentiments, but it must be admitted that Bhavabhūti is a greater master of this art than Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa. Bhavabhūti, it is true, found ample opportunities for the delineation of different sentiments in his three dramas. Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa with only one drama to his credit did not have so many. All the same it cannot be questioned that though Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa may sometimes rise to Bhavabhūti's level, the author of the *Veṇīśaṁhāra* cannot be put down as an equal of the author of the *Uttararāmacarita*.

Secondly, both these poets are unsuccessful in the development of the plot and in the arrangement of the various incidents constituting it. Both of them were not

(a) Vide foot-note (p) above on p. 94.

able to evolve out of the materials chosen by them a well-connected story fit for dramatic purposes. In his Mahāvīracarita and Uttararāmacarita Bhavabhūti resorted to the Rāmāyaṇa for his plot, even as Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa turned to the other great national epic for the plot of his Venīsamhāra. This certainly acted as a handicap in the case of both these poets for the proper development of the plot. But Bhavabhūti suffered no such disadvantage in his Mālatīmādhava. But even there he has not been able to evolve out of the various incidents a harmonious story. Both Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa and Bhavabhūti were in short defective in dramatic construction. As dramatic artists both cannot be said to be very successful.

We have seen above ( p. 125 ) that Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa displays close acquaintance with the technique of scenic representation on the stage. Bhavabhūti also, we know from his own statements,<sup>(r)</sup> was friendly with actors and consequently must have been familiar with the requirements of a drama for success in a theatre. In spite of their knowledge of the technical side of dramatic representation both the poets have not been successful in giving us plays that would be successful on the stage. Bhavabhūti's Uttararāmacarita for example is considered to be more a dramatic poem than a poetic drama. Perhaps the same may be said with regard to the Venīsamhāra of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa.

It has been shown above that Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa lacked sense of proportion.<sup>(s)</sup> The same accusation is levelled against Bhavabhūti.

(r) Read :—‘भवभूतिनाम जातुकर्णीपुत्रः कविर्मित्रधेयमस्माकम्’ महावीरचरित-  
प्रस्तावना; ‘भवभूतिनामा जातुकर्णीपुत्रः कविर्निसर्गसौहृदेन भरतेषु’ मालतीमाधव-  
प्रस्तावना.

(s) *Idem*, pp. 124-125 above.



In the matter of their literary style Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa and Bhavabhūti resemble most. Both write a rough and rugged style, clearly distinguishable from the polished and elegant style of Kālidāsa. Both show fondness for long compounds and many a time use more words than are necessary. Both display skill in the art of making the sound an echo of the sense. Both seem clearly to be under the influence of Daṇḍin's dictum regarding profuseness of compounds forming the essence of prose.

It will thus be seen that as dramatists Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa and Bhavabhūti resemble each other in many respects. It would therefore not be wrong to say that both belonged to the same literary age.

In the above paragraphs we have shown that Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa resembles Bhavabhūti in many respects. That has been done to prove that both of them belonged to the same age. But it must not be inferred therefrom that we consider Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa to be Bhavabhūti's equal as a poet. There are points in which they differ and in which Bhavabhūti is far superior to Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa. In fairness to Bhavabhūti we must say a few words about these points as well.

Even in the matter of literary style in which the two poets resemble most, Bhavabhūti impresses us as a greater artist. His vocabulary is much larger than that of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa and he seems to wield greater command over the language than the author of the *Veṇīśaṃhāra*.

As a poet of nature Bhavabhūti far surpasses Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa. The love for the grand and sublime in nature that we see in Bhavabhūti's plays is nowhere visible in the *Veṇīśaṃhāra*. The close observation of varied nature and natural phenomena that we find in Bhavabhūti is not

met with in Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa. As a matter of fact as we saw before<sup>(1)</sup> Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa does not distinguish himself very much as a poet of nature.

As a delineator of human passions and emotions and especially of the tender feelings of the human heart Bhavabhūti once more surpasses Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa. Bhavabhūti's conception of conjugal love is perhaps the grandest and the most sublime that we have in Sanskrit dramatic poetry. The love that Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa deals with in his second Act is of the sensual kind. There is no doubt Bhavabhūti possessed far greater knowledge of the workings of human hearts than Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa.

(1) Vide p. 127 above.



## XI SOCIETY IN BHATTA NĀRĀYAṆA'S DAYS

In composing a drama such as the *Veṅṛisambhāra* a poet can have no intention of portraying a picture of contemporary society. In fact it would be his endeavour to make his picture correspond as closely as possible to the society of the days to which the plot of his drama belongs. Yet it is always possible to get a few glimpses of contemporary society from the study of a poet's works. For, though the poet may not consciously desire it, contemporary society is to a certain extent reflected in his works.

First, then, as regards the state of religious beliefs in Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's days, we have already seen in the first Section of this Study that the two prevailing religions were Brahmanism and Buddhism. While Buddhism was powerful at Kanouj and went to the length of persecuting the followers of the Vedic religion,<sup>(u)</sup> Brahmanism found support in Bengal where it was followed in its ancient form viz. the performance of sacrifices. The fact that Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa compares war with a sacrifice<sup>(v)</sup> shows that the performance of sacrifices was a common occurrence. There is also a reference to oblations being offered in blazing fire.<sup>(vv)</sup> The cult of bhakti or devotion to Viṣṇu also prevailed. The two deities, that prominently received worship, were Viṣṇu and Śiva. The sun too was an object of adoration.<sup>(w)</sup> The pantheon included some other deities

(u) It must be stated here that there are no references to Buddhism in the *Veṅṛisambhāra*.

(v) Vide foot-note (o) on p. 13 above.

(vv) See 'आहुतिद्वयेन प्रज्वलितेन भगवता हुताग्नेन च नश्यतु ।' Act ii, p. 37

(w) Read 'हजे तरलिके, उपनय मेऽर्घ्यमाजनं यावद् भगवतः सहस्ररश्मेः सपर्यं  
जिह्वयामि' Act ii, p. 40

as well.<sup>(x)</sup> Even as now flowers formed the principal material with which deities were worshipped.<sup>(y)</sup>

Various religious rites and vows were evidently in vogue. Their observance was supposed to be efficacious in securing desired objects. It was not necessary that the person, who was to achieve the object, should himself perform the rites or observe the vows. Some other person could do so in his interest. For we remember in the second Act Bhānumatī undertakes to observe certain vows in order to ensure victory for her husband in the war.<sup>(z)</sup> Gifts to Brāhmanas was another form of religious charity.<sup>(a)</sup> Nāma-saṅkīrtana or muttering of a deity's name was also supposed to be effective from the religious point of view.<sup>(b)</sup> Personal decorations were discarded while engaged in religious observances.<sup>(c)</sup>

Among religious practices must be included the performance of funeral rites and the presentation of obsequial water to the dead.<sup>(d)</sup> Cremation was the prevalent method

(x) Note 'हजे तरलिके, उपनय मे कुङ्कुमानि यावदपरासामपि देवतानां सपर्यां निर्वर्तयामि।' Act ii, p. 41.

(y) Vide the preceding foot-note and i. 1.

(z) Read 'एषा मातुमती देवी पत्युः समरविजयाशंसया..... अथ प्रभृति आरब्धनियमा वालोयाने तिष्ठति।' Act ii, p. 26; आर्यपुत्र, अभ्यनुज्ञातायास्त्वया अस्ति मे कास्मिन्नपि नियमेऽभिलाषः।' Act ii, p. 42 and 'किन्तु आर्यपुत्रस्यैव मनोरथसंपत्तिर्माभिनन्दामि।' Act ii, p. 43

(a) Note 'तदेवतानां प्रणामेन द्विजातिजनप्रसन्निरहेण च अन्तर्नयताम्।' Act ii, p. 38

(b) See 'येनाहमपि प्रतिष्ठापयन्त्यो प्रशंसया देवतासंकीर्तनेन च परिहरिष्यामः।' Act ii, p. 28

(c) Read 'वक्त्रेन्दुं ते नियममुषितालक्तकाङ्गाधरं वा' ii. 18c.

(d) Note 'अग्रन्मिश्रं कथंचिद्वदतु जलममी बान्धवा बान्धवेभ्यः' v. 36a and 'पितुर्मव वारिदः' vi. 24d. In Act vi Yudhiṣṭhira offers water to his ancestors and to Bhīmasena who was reported to him to be dead. Vide p. 184 (Text).



of disposing of the dead bodies.<sup>(e)</sup> In the performance of the śrāddha water was offered to three immediate ancestors, who are known to constitute a pārvāṇa, even as in modern days.<sup>(f)</sup> Women also offered obsequial water to dead relatives.<sup>(g)</sup>

The belief that some kind of impurity, called mṛtā-śauca, attached to the relatives of the dead, was held in those days even as in these. For, we find the demon Cārvāka refuses to take water from Yudhiṣṭhira on the ground that his relatives must be dying every day in the battle that is proceeding.<sup>(h)</sup>

(e) Read 'कुर्वन्त्वावा हतानां रणशिरसि जना वद्विसादेहभारान्' v. 36b.

(f) In Act vi Yudhiṣṭhira offers water to his father, grand-father and great-grand-father. Read 'यष तावत् सलिलाञ्जलिर्गङ्गेयाय भीष्माय श्रुवे । अयं प्रपितामहाय शान्तनवे । अयमपि पितामहाय विचित्रवीर्याय । (सालम्) तातस्याधुनावसरः । अयं तावत् स्वर्गस्थिताय सुगृहीतनाम्ने पित्रे पाण्डवे ।' Act vi. p. 184. Yudhiṣṭhira's three immediate ancestors were Pāṇḍu, Vicitravīrya and Śāntanu. The correct form of the name of his great-grand-father is Śāntanu. The Kumbhakonum edition of the Mahābhārata, however, gives in one place (Adiparvan 63.49) the form Śāntanu.—Yudhiṣṭhira begins this presentation of cavity-fuls of water with Bhīṣma, because Bhīṣma was to him an object of great veneration. Then again though at this time, Bhīṣma was alive, he was considered as good as dead, because he was lying on a bed of arrows, waiting for the proper opportunity to die.—Note that the above passage is incorrectly printed in our text on p. 184 and that the translation given there is also incorrect. The student can easily correct it with the proper punctuations given above.

(g) Note Yudhiṣṭhira's words to Draupadī 'कृष्णे, त्वमपि देहि सलिलाञ्जलिम्' Act vi. p. 185

(h) Read 'मुलमम्रं स्वजनविनाशः संग्रामेषु प्रतिदिनमृतो नादेयं मवद्वयो जलादिकम्' Act vi, p. 165

The practice of making conditional offers to deities with a view to secure desired objects, called *navasa* in Marāṭhī, was in vogue,<sup>(i)</sup> exactly as it is in modern times.

Some information regarding the secular life of the people can also be had from the *Venīsamhāra*. Belief in dreams and omens such as the throbbing of the eye, as indicative of future events, was common. Bhānumatī dreams an ominous dream and is exceedingly upset thereby (p. 27). It was however believed that evils indicated by ominous dreams could be averted by religious practices such as the eulogy of gods and the muttering of the names of the deities.<sup>(j)</sup> Warriors like Duryodhana (p. 38) and Aśvatthāman (p. 61) feel the throbbing of their left eye and are perturbed on that account. Yudhiṣṭhira on the other hand experiences the throbbing of his right eye and consequently believes that some stroke of good fortune is near (p. 186). It is interesting to note that this belief in dreams and the throbbing of the eye continues unabated even in modern times.

Movements of the stars in the sky were supposed to exercise influence over the lives of human beings, even as now. But evidently a healthy school of thinkers was springing up. They believed there was no truth whatsoever in the suggestive character of dreams and omens. Only the timid were frightened by such things. If at any time movements of stars, dreams, omens and conditional offers

(i) Note the occurrence of the word *upayācitam* in ii. 15.

(j) Read:—

सखी—यद्येवं तत् कथयतु प्रियसखी । येनावामपि प्रतिष्ठापयन्त्यौ प्रशंसया देवतासं-  
कीर्तनेन च परिहरिष्यावः ।

चेटी—देवि पवमेतत् । अकुशलदर्शना अपि स्वप्नाः प्रशंसया कुशलपरिणामा भवन्तीति  
श्रूयते ।

—Act ii, p. 28



bore fruit, such phenomenon must be considered to be purely fortuitous.<sup>(k)</sup>

Caste system was prevalent and Brāhmaṇas were regarded as specially entitled to respect. But the castes evidently were not the water-tight compartments of society that they are supposed to be at present. Even sages, for example, felt no scruples in accepting water from Kṣatriyas to allay their thirst. Cārvāka is ready to drink water that is brought by Yudhiṣṭhira's chamberlain. Only when he comes to know that Yudhiṣṭhira as a Kṣatriya is likely to be contaminated by mṛtāśauca that he refuses to drink it (p. 165 ).

The practice of committing suicide on the death of a loved relative,<sup>(l)</sup> called Satī when the person committing suicide is a wife, was in vogue in Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's days. Such suicide was supposed to secure for the person dying union with the dead person in the other world. While wandering on the battle-field Sundaraka came across a scene wherein the mother and wife of a dead warrior were dying after him.<sup>(m)</sup> The readiness of Yudhiṣṭhira

(k) Note ' (वामाक्षिस्पन्दनं सूचयित्वा ) आः कथं ममापि नाम दुर्योधनस्यानिमिच्चानि हृदयक्षोभमावहन्ति । ( सावट्टम्भम् ) अथवा भीरुजनहृदयप्रकम्पनेषु का गणना दुर्योधनस्यैवविषेष्ट । गतिश्चायमर्थोऽङ्गिरसा ।

ग्रहाणां चरितं स्वप्नो निमित्तान्युपयाचितम् ।

फलन्ति काफतालीयं तेभ्यः प्राज्ञा न विन्यति ॥ १५ ॥

Act ii, pp. 38-39.

(l) It is a mistake to suppose, as many do, that only wives committed suicide on the death of their husbands in ancient India. Suicide was committed by other relatives and even friends also. Compare 'यदेतदनुमरणं नाम तदतिनिष्फलम् । ...नौर्ह्यस्वलितमिदं यद्वरते पितरि भ्रातरि सहदि मर्तरि वा प्राणाः परित्यज्यन्ते ।' बाण-कादम्बरी p. 173 ( Peterson )

(m) Read ' हा अतिकरुणं खल्वत्र वर्तते । एषा वीरमाता समरविनिहतं पुत्रकं भुत्वा रक्तान्धुकनिवसनया समग्रभूषणया बध्वा सहायुव्रियते । ( सस्लाघम् ) साधु वीरमातः साधु । अन्यस्मिन्नापि जन्मान्तरादनिहतपुत्रकाभविष्यसि ।' Act iv, p. 102.

and Draupadī to die on a pyre on learning the news of the death of Bhīmasena points to the prevalence of the same practice. When the wife became Satī, she was dressed in red and wore all her ornaments.

Elders received proper respect. It was customary to go to them early in the morning and offer them salutation. In the first Act we find that Draupadī, Subhadrā and other ladies of the Pāṇḍava family had gone to Gāndhārī for bowing to her feet.<sup>(n)</sup> In the second Act Bhānumatī also goes to Gāndhārī early in the morning for the same purpose.<sup>(o)</sup> In the fifth Act Arjuna suggests to Bhīmasena that it would not be proper to go to Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Gāndhārī, as their sight would afflict the blind couple. Bhīmasena however insists on going to them on the ground that etiquette requires that elders should be saluted.<sup>(p)</sup>

Widows, it would seem, did not arrange their hair in any ornamental fashion, but allowed them to hang loosely on their back in one mass. Ladies in separation also did the same.<sup>(q)</sup> Letting loose the hair was in fact a definite indication of widowhood.<sup>(r)</sup> Tonsure of widows was un-

(n) Read 'अथ सल्लु देवी अन्वासहिता ह्यभद्राप्रसूत्रेण सपत्नीवर्गेण परिहृता आशया गान्धार्या पादचन्दनं कर्तुं गता' Act i, p. 17

(o) Note 'अन्विष्यतां देवी भानुमती । अपि निवृत्ता अन्वायाः पादचन्दनसमयाद्य वेति ।'  
Act ii, p. 25

(p) See:—

अर्जुनः—आर्य, प्रसीद । न युक्तं पुत्रशोकोपपीडितौ पितरौ पुनरस्मद्वर्जितेन भृशमुद्वेजयितुम् । तद् गच्छावः ।

भीमः—सूढ, अनुलङ्घनीयः सदाचारः । न युक्तमनामिवाद्य यत्नं गन्तुम् ।

—Act v, p. 141

(q) Vide i. 18 and our note thereon.

(r) Note the significance of Buddhimatikā's words in 'अयि भानुमति, युष्माकममुक्तेषु केशहस्तेषु कथमस्माकं देव्याः केशाः संयम्यन्ते ।'

Act i, p. 18



known in the time of the Mahābhārata; nor does it appear to be prevalent in Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's days. But widows apparently were not allowed to use the bodice to cover their bosom. For, in the account of the dream of Bhānumati the removal of her breast-garment is meant to be a definite indication of the infliction of widow-hood on her.<sup>(s)</sup>

Medical and surgical science had apparently made considerable advance. Arrow-heads were extracted from the bodies by means of powerful pincers and wounds were properly dressed.<sup>(t)</sup> Roads were evidently in good condition and sand was spread on them.<sup>(u)</sup>

(s) Read 'नकुलेन पञ्चगशतवधः स्तनांश्चुकापहरणं चेति नियतमनिष्टोदकं तर्कयामि'  
Act ii, p. 38

(t) Note 'कथमेते खलु स्वामिनो गाढप्रहारहतस्य वनसन्नाहजालङ्घनेयमुखैः कङ्क-  
वदनैर्हृदयाच्छलयान्युद्धरन्ति ।' Act iv, p. 101 and  
शल्यानि व्यपनीयः कङ्कवदनैरुन्मोचिते कङ्कटे  
वज्रेषु व्रणपट्टकेषु शनकैः कर्णे कृतापाशयः । v.1ab

(u) See 'झाङ्गरी झर्करालः पेषिषु' ii. 19, which tells us that the tempestuous wind blowing along roads was charged with sand.

## XII THE MODE OF ANCIENT WARFARE

The Venīsamhāra deals with the story of the Mahābhārata war and it is therefore possible to get some idea of ancient warfare from its study. In this Section we propose to put down what we learn about ancient warfare from the Venīsamhāra.

The army consisted of four constituents viz. elephants, chariots, horses and foot-soldiers.<sup>(v)</sup> It was consequently known as caturāṅgam balaṁ. Great warriors used to fight from chariots and were known as mahārathas.<sup>(w)</sup> In the order of their eminence warriors were known as rathin, mahāratha and atiratha.<sup>(x)</sup> Chariots were decked with golden bells, garlands of flowers and chowries.<sup>(y)</sup> They carried golden pitchers of water as a mark of auspiciousness and flew a flag, marked with a special emblem, which proclaimed who the chariot-fighter was.<sup>(z)</sup>

Weapons of various kinds were used. Of these the bow and the arrows, the mace and the sword were the principal. Javelins (*tomarah*) and a weapon known as śakti were also in use.<sup>(a)</sup> What the exact form of the śakti was is not quite

(v) Read 'कथं.....द्विरदतुरंगमचरणचारिणां.....महाबादो बलानाम्' p. 62; 'हतगजवाजिनरकलेवरसहस्रसमर्द्धं' p. 92 and 'उभयबलमिलद्वीप्यमान-करितुरगपदातिसमुद्भूतधूलिनिकरेण पर्यस्ततच्चद्रगजघटासंघातेन च' p. 105

(w) Note 'कथमेते महारथाः कर्णादयोऽपि' p. 62

(x) See iii. 28 wherein Droṇa is referred to as atiratha.

(y) Vide 'उद्धातकणितधिलोलहेमघण्टः प्रालम्बद्विगुणितचामरप्रहासः ।' ii. 29; 'ऋतफलफलकिङ्किणीजालमालिना रथेन' p. 92

(z) Read 'धवलचपलचामरधुम्बितकनककमण्डलुना शिखरावद्वैजयन्तीसूचि-तेन.....रथेन' p. 92

(a) Read 'मो मो, अस्मदर्शनमयस्खलितकार्मुककृपाणतोमरशक्तयः कौरवचक्षुभटाः' p. 93



clear. It was apparently a pointed weapon, furnished with golden bells and studded with jewels. It blazed in its career towards the target.<sup>(b)</sup> We are told Arjuna threw a śakti at Vṛṣasena, who cut it into three with a crescent-shaped arrow.<sup>(c)</sup> We know from the Mahābhārata that Karna killed Ghatotkaca by means of a śakti, which had been obtained from Indra and had been reserved for Arjuna.

Besides these certain consecrated weapons, called astras, were used.<sup>(d)</sup> Apparently they were simple arrows that received miraculous powers when consecrated by the muttering of sacred charms. Separate charms were necessary for their discharge and withdrawal.

But the chief weapons were the bow and the arrows. Archers were so skilful in discharging arrows that it was impossible to observe when they drew them out of the quiver, placed them on the bow-string, took the aim and discharged them at the enemy.<sup>(e)</sup> A wonderfully large supply of arrows was evidently carried by each great warrior in his chariot. Thus we find that Kṛpa stopped the progress of hostile troops by 'a shower of arrows' (p. 92) and Karna also 'rained a shower of arrows' (p. 104) when he attacked Bhīmasena. Vṛṣasena covered Arjuna's chariot with dark-coloured arrows as a tree in blossom is covered with bees (p. 107). Later on the same young

(b) Note 'ततश्च देव...किरीटिना दृष्टिता रथोत्सङ्गात् कणत्कनककिङ्किणीजाल-  
झङ्कारविराविणी.....निशितश्यामलस्निग्धमुखी विविधरत्नप्रभाभासुर-  
भीषणरमणीयदर्शना शक्तिः' and 'प्रज्वलन्ती शक्तिं प्रेक्ष्य' p. 112

(c) See 'ततो देव, कुमारवृषसेनेनाकर्णकृदनिशितसुरप्रेण.....अर्पयथ एव.....त्रिषा  
कृता शक्तिः' p. 113

(d) Note 'अस्त्रज्वालावलीढप्रतिबलजलधेरन्तरौर्वायमाणे' iii. 7a and 'तान्ये-  
वाहितशस्त्रधत्तमरुत्तम्यस्त्राणि मास्वन्ति मे' iii. 33c

(e) See 'अविज्ञातसंचानमोक्षनिक्षिप्तशरधारावर्षिण' p. 104 and 'अविमावित-  
तूणरिधुसधुदुर्गममननदरिद्राभिमोक्षधुल्लिखितलेखपुत्रावदधनेन' p. 108

warrior enveloped Arjuna's body with 'thousands of arrows' (p. 111). Arjuna of course was the most dexterous archer of them all. He was so quick in the discharge of arrows that in his fight with Karna and Vṛṣasena he arranged two rivers of arrows flowing in the direction of their chariots. At this time the arrows shot by Arjuna were so numerous that heaven and earth were filled therewith and nothing could be seen (p. 115).

These descriptions of the discharge of countless arrows, which are of course copied from the Mahābhārata, must be regarded as gross exaggerations. For otherwise we should have to suppose that the arrows of ancient times were rather harmless affairs. For how could a man, whose body was covered with thousands of arrows, remain alive?

Warriors used to wear armours.<sup>(f)</sup> These apparently gave them protection against arrows, though many a time the armours were pierced through by the arrows.

The bows were supplied with powerful strings which produced a twanging noise that resembled the thunder of clouds (p. 105). Scars were produced on the left wrists (ii. 27) by the striking of the bow-strings and were regarded as decorations by warriors.

Great commanders carried swords with them. The sword apparently was an emblem of office, even as in modern times. But the ancient sword was not the harmless thing of modern days. Dhṛṣṭadyumna cut the head of Droṇa with a sword (p. 59). When Āsvatthāman and Karna fall out, they draw swords and become ready to kill each other (p. 85). Karna thinks of cutting Āsvatthāman's raised foot with his sword (p. 85) and when Āsvatthāman

(f) Read 'कङ्कटोन्मुक्तदेहेः' ii. 27 and वनसज्जाहजालउर्मेयमुल्लेः कटुवदनैः'



vows not to take any active part in the war, it is the sword that he throws down as a symbol of his abandonment of all weapons (p. 87).

The mace was another common weapon. It was a weapon in which a few specialised. Balarāma was the best mace-fighter of the time and both Bhīmasena and Duryodhana were his pupils in that art. Duryodhana possessed greater skill than Bhīmasena and was Balarāma's favourite pupil. Bhīmasena had strength on his side.<sup>(g)</sup> The last fight of the war viz. the fight between Bhīmasena and Duryodhana was a mace-fight. Of the younger warriors Vṛṣasena was fond of mace-fight.<sup>(h)</sup>

The battle-field presented a terrible appearance. Rivers of blood flew and a regular quagmire was produced from the blood, fat, flesh and marrow of men and animals killed. Chariots sometimes stuck in this and valiant foot-soldiers had to plant their feet on these chariots in order to effect further advance.<sup>(i)</sup>

The size of the armies was very large. The white umbrellas that were carried with them produced the illusion of a forest of white lotuses. As the armies moved from one place to another, or met in an encounter, huge clouds of dust were raised and the sun and even the entire sky were obscured.<sup>(j)</sup>

There were certain laws of war that were scrupulously observed. Thus, every day the fight closed with the sun-

(g) See vi. 13 and 16

(h) Not 'गदायुद्धमिव' p. 116, occurring in Duryodhana's lamentations addressed to Vṛṣasena.

(i) Read i. 27 and pp. 56-58.

(j) See ii. 27c and p. 105.

set and during the night people searched for the bodies of their dead relatives on the battle-field and consigned them to the fire (v. 36). Surprise, which is regarded as the most important principle of modern war-fare, was looked down upon in epic India. It was unchivalrous to take the enemy unawares and to attack him while he was unprepared. Warriors therefore blew their conches to announce their arrival, when they wanted to attack an enemy (p. 106). Fights apparently took place at close quarters. For, before they actually commenced and even during their course, wordy defiances were thrown at each other by the combatants (pp. 107-108, 111 and 114).

At the head of the army was the Commander-in-Chief. Dhr̥ṣṭadyumna was the Commander-in-Chief of the Pāṇḍava all through the war. The supreme command of the Kaurava army on the other hand passed successively from Bhīṣma to Droṇa, Karṇa, Śalya and Aśvatthāman. It is impossible to find out what exactly was the relation of the Commander-in-Chief with the king and warriors of the royal family on the one hand and with other army commanders on the other. It would seem that the Commander-in-Chief's position was more of honour than of duty. He apparently had no control or authority over other commanders that were supposed to fight under him. For, had it not been so, Aśvatthāman would never have dared to behave in the way he is depicted to have done in Act iii. Why was he allowed by King Duryodhana to flout the new Commander-in-Chief's authority and even to be ready to strike at him? Why did Duryodhana in his capacity as King, or Karṇa in his capacity as Commander-in-Chief, not put Aśvatthāman under arrest and dismiss him from the army or order him to be executed for gross insubordination? Even the king was apparently helpless to prevent this unseemly quarrel between two of his best gene-



erals. Apart from the question as to who was the aggressor in this quarrel between *Aśvatthāman* and *Karna*, the fact that such a quarrel at all took place shows that there was something fundamentally wrong with the army-organization of ancient India.

And that fundamental defect of ancient Indian armies was the absence of proper discipline. Discipline, which includes the subordination of personal interests and ambition, was apparently unknown in ancient India. Each commander fought more or less on his own and there was no central authority that exercised effective control over them all. Commanders apparently thought more about themselves and their interests than about the cause they were fighting for. *Drona* really had no business to lay down his arms when he learnt the news of the death of his beloved son. By doing so he showed that he valued private affection more than public duty. The same tendency is found in the history of Hindu India in recent times. On the same battle-field, hundreds of years after *Drona*, in 1761 A. D., *Bhauasaheb Peshwa* acted in a similar manner. When *Vishvasrao* fell, he dismounted his elephant and sought his ruin. Here we had a repetition of the same deplorable preference shown to private grief at the cost of higher duties and responsibilities.

## APPENDIX—A

The following stanzas are attributed to Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa in anthologies, but are not found in the extant text of the *Veṇīśaṁhāra* :

(1) From the *Subhāṣitāvalī*:—

79

उत्तिष्ठन्त्या रतान्ते भरमुरगपतौ पाणिनैकेन कृत्वा  
धृत्वा चान्येन वासो विगलितकचरीभारमंसं वहन्त्याः ।  
भूयस्तत्कालकान्तिद्विगुणितसुरतप्रीतिना शौरिणा वः  
शम्यामालिङ्ग्य नीतं वपुरलसलसद्बाहु लक्ष्म्याः पुनातु ॥

भट्टनारायणस्य

141

क दोषोऽत्र मया लभ्य इति संचिन्त्य चेतसा ।  
खलः कान्येषु साधूनां श्रवणाय प्रवर्तते ॥

भट्टनारायणस्य

149

यास्पति सज्जनहस्तं रमयिष्यति तं भवेच्च निर्दोषा ।  
वत्पादितयापि कविस्ताम्यति कथया दुहित्रेव ॥

भट्टनारायणस्य

548

रवेरेवोदयः श्लाघ्यः कोऽन्येषामुदयग्रहः ।  
न तमोसि न तेजांसि यस्मिन्नभ्युदिते सति ॥

549

किमनेन न पर्याप्तं कान्तत्वं शशलक्ष्मणा ॥  
स्रसंतप्तापि नलिनी यद्विश्वासप्रपागमत् ॥

550

करान् प्रसार्य रविणा दक्षिणाशावलम्बिता ।  
न केवलमनेनात्मा द्विवसोऽपि लघुकृतः ॥



551

वर्तते येन पाताङ्गिः षण्मासान् द्वौ च वत्सरौ ।  
 राशिः स एव चन्द्रस्य न याति दिवसत्रयम् ॥  
 एते भट्टनारायणस्य

1591

ईर्ष्याप्रस्फुरिताधरौष्ठरुचकं वक्त्रं न मे दर्शितं  
 साधिक्षेपपद्म मनागपि गिरो न श्राविता मुग्धया ।  
 मद्दोषैः सरसैः प्रतापितमनोवृत्त्यापि कोपोऽजया ।  
 काञ्च्या गाढतरावचद्भवसनग्रन्थया समावेदितः ।  
 नारायणस्य

(2) From the Śārṅgadharapaddhati:—

235

उत्तिष्ठन्त्या रतान्ते etc.

निशानारायणस्य

4009

अक्षुद्रारिकृताभिमन्युनिधनप्रोद्धततत्रिभ्रुवः  
 पार्थस्याकृतशात्रवप्रतिकृतेरन्तः शुचा मुह्यतः ।  
 कीर्णा बाष्पकणैः पतन्ति धनुषि व्रीडाजडा दृष्टयो  
 हा वत्सेति गिरः स्फुरन्ति न पुनर्नियान्ति वक्त्राद्बहिः ॥  
 निशानारायणस्य

(3) The following stanzas occur in anthologies as quotations from the Venīsamhāra. They are not found in the extant text of the play, but they occur in a Telugu Ms. of the drama. See p. 21 of Critical Introduction by B. T. Dravid alias Sheshadri Iyer and S. T. Dravid to their edition of the Venīsamhāra (1896).

अक्षुद्रारिकृताभिमन्युनिधन etc. ॥ ? ॥

देवव्रते वाञ्छति दीर्घनिद्रां  
 द्रोणे च कर्णे च यशोऽवशेषे ।  
 लक्ष्मीसहायस्य तवाद्य वत्स

नारायणस्य दोषिरयं सहायः ॥ २ ॥

स्वामी दुर्नयवारणव्यतिकरे शौर्योपदेशे गुरु-  
 विस्त्रम्भे हृदयं नियोगसमये दासो भये चाश्रयः ।  
 दाता सप्तसमुद्रसीमरशनादामाङ्कितायाः क्षितेः  
 सर्वाकारमहीस्वयंवरसुहृत् को वा न कर्णो मम ॥ ३ ॥ (५३८)  
 चक्रं वा मधुहा कृतान्तगृहिणां दत्ताग्रपञ्चाङ्गुलं  
 वज्रं भूधरपक्षशोणितसुरापानोन्मदं वा वृषा ।  
 शूलं चासुररक्तचिन्दुनितितं गृह्णातु शूलायुधो  
 धृष्टद्युम्नमहं निहन्मि समरे कश्चित् परित्रायताम् ॥ ४ ॥ (३२१)



## APPENDIX B.

### Difficult Words in the Venīsamhāra.

[The figures after the words refer to the number of pages of Notes in our edition of the Venīsamhāra.]

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